

Agenda – Petitions Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 1 – Senedd

Meeting date: 7 March 2017

Meeting time: 09.00

For further information contact:

Graeme Francis – Committee Clerk

Kath Thomas – Deputy Clerk

0300 200 6565

SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales

1 Introduction, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest (Pages 1 – 29)

2 New petitions

2.1 P-05-742 Stop Forsythia Closing
(Pages 30 – 35)

2.2 P-05-743 End the Exotic Pet Trade in Wales
(Pages 36 – 49)

2.3 P-05-744 Stop Gazumping; Follow Scotland's Buying Process
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3 Updates to previous petitions

Economy and Infrastructure

The following three items will be grouped together for consideration

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3.2 P-04-513 Save the Wrexham/Barmouth X94 bus service
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3.3 P-04-515 Increase Funding for Welsh Bus Services
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- 3.4 P-04-686 Install a Traffic Lights System at Cross Hands Roundabout
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- 3.5 P-05-729 Removal of M4 Speed Restrictions at the Brynglass Tunnels
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- 3.6 P-05-733 No Further Actions on Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZ) In Wales At All
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Health

- 3.7 P-04-532 Improving specialised neuromuscular services in Wales
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- 3.8 P-04-570 Inequitable Access to Treatments That Have Not Been Nationally Appraised in NHS Wales
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- 3.9 P-05-699 A Treatment Fund for Wales – There Must be an End to the Healthcare Postcode Lottery
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- 3.10 P-05-693 Give Every Child in Wales the Meningitis B Vaccine for Free
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Education

- 3.11 P-04-481 Close the Gap for deaf pupils in Wales
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- 3.14 P-04-439 Ancient veteran and heritage trees of Wales to be given greater protection
(Pages 109 – 110)

Gyllid a Llywodraeth Leol

- 3.15 P-04-681 Allow Public Recording of Local Government Meetings
(Pages 111 - 113)
- 3.16 P-05-730 Local Government Finance and Funding
(Pages 114 - 117)
- 4 Motion under Standing Order 17.42(ix) to resolve to exclude the public from the meeting for the remainder of the meeting**
- 5 Review of the National Assembly for Wales Petitions System**

Document is Restricted

Agenda Item 2.1

P-05-742 Stop Forsythia Closing!

This petition was submitted by Forsythia Youth Centre, having collected 74 signatures. The petition has also collected 533 signatures on an alternative e-petition website.

Text of the Petition

Forsythia Youth Centre is at risk of closing due to the uncertainty surrounding Welsh Government's Communities First funding. Forsythia Youth Centre is a FREE access youth provision which is open: –

- 4 nights a week for 51 weeks of the year;
- Open during the day and the evenings throughout school holidays;
- Open on the weekend if completing project work.

Without fail, Forsythia has a minimum of 50 young people aged 11–20 from across Gurnos, Galon Uchaf, Pant, Dowlais and Penydarren, attending every night. Without Forsythia Youth Centre, young people would not have a safe place to access within their community and they would not have anywhere else to go due to a lack of other provision aimed at young people.

Forsythia Youth Centre offers young people the opportunity to take part in youth projects, such as 'Commit to Quit' with Ash Wales, Erasmus+ project on 'Attitudes and Values of Youth Work', and the 'Agenda Project' with Cardiff University. Young people are also provided the opportunity to access organisations such as Drug Aid, Sexual Health projects, Smoking Cessation, Mental Health and Confidence Building, Skills and Qualifications and receive in house support from qualified youth workers.

Young people and the workers are very concerned about the uncertainty surrounding the Communities First funding, as without this funding, Forsythia will have to close down.

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to ensure that potential changes to the Communities First programme do not cause the closure of Forsythia Youth Centre.

Additional Information

1. The young people involved with Forsythia Youth Centre have been part of a campaign to improve community safety, which resulted in having a zebra crossing installed outside of the Youth Centre, lighting installed on the hospital pathways and the dangerous subway closed which was always full of drug paraphernalia.
2. The young people are involved with going into local schools and Merthyr Tydfil College to deliver peer education on Smoking Cessation.
3. The young people of Forsythia have been involved with the National Assembly for Wales Health and Social Care Committee during the Forth Assembly, where young people took part in a focus group meeting with Assembly Committee Members on the new Psychoactive Substances Inquiry.
4. The Forsythia Youth Centre has won 18 awards over the past 13 years both locally, nationally and internationally.
5. Young people at Forsythia have collected 533 signatures using change.org to support this petition.

Assembly Constituency and Region.

- Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney
- South Wales East

Forsythia Youth Centre

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 7 Mawrth 2017

Petitions Committee | 7 March 2017

Research Briefing

Petition number: P-05-742

Petition title: Stop Forsythia Closing

Text of petition: Forsythia Youth Centre is at risk of closing due to the uncertainty surrounding Welsh Government's Communities First funding.

Forsythia Youth Centre is a FREE access youth provision which is open:

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Without Forsythia Youth Centre, young people would not have a safe place to access within their community and they would not have anywhere else to go due to a lack of other provision aimed at young people.

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Young people and the workers are very concerned about the uncertainty surrounding the Communities First funding, as without this funding, Forsythia will have to close down.

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to ensure that potential changes to the Communities First programme do not cause the closure of Forsythia Youth Centre.

Communities First

[Communities First](#) is the Welsh Government's main programme for tackling poverty. It began in 2001, but the programme was reorganised in 2012 to improve performance and accountability. Communities First aims to “narrow the economic, education/skills and health gaps between our most deprived and more affluent areas”, with the long term aim of “contributing to alleviating persistent poverty”. It does this by providing funding to 19 ‘lead delivery bodies’ (LDBs) for 52 different areas known as ‘clusters’, which then distribute funding to individual projects.

In February 2017, the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children announced that the [Communities First Programme would be phased out](#). During that announcement he stated:

“I know the potential impact on individuals and communities. So, I will adopt a careful approach going forward, seeking to preserve some of the most effective aspects of the work done by Communities First. I will ensure that lead delivery bodies have sufficient time and resources to plan the transition. And so, I have decided that funding, at 70 per cent of current levels, will be provided until March 2018. I will establish a legacy fund of £6 million, to be introduced in April 2018, which will enable local authorities, in consultation with communities and public services boards, to maintain some of the most effective interventions or community assets developed by Communities First.”

The Cabinet Secretary also specifically commented on [mitigating any possible effect on children and young people](#):

“Investing in our children is an investment for the long term. It is the most sustainable means of building a more prosperous future.

I have been encouraged by the very positive response to the development of Children's Zones and the establishment of an “ACEs Hub”, to help organisations, communities and individuals across Wales tackle Adverse Childhood Experiences, which can have such a devastating impact on children's life chances.

These initiatives, together with our continued investment in our successful Flying Start and Families First programmes, will ensure there is comprehensive support for children as they grow up.”

National Assembly for Wales Action

In December 2016, the Assembly's Children, Young People and Education Committee issued a report following its inquiry into [Youth Work](#). All of the recommendations were either accepted in full or in principle by the Welsh Government. The Welsh Government's full response is available on the Assembly's [website](#) and the transcript of the discussion in Plenary is available here: [RoP, 8 February 2017](#).

There is due to be a Statement by Alun Davies, Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language on “The Future of Youth Work Delivery in Wales” on Tuesday 21st March 2017.

The Communities First programme has been subject to scrutiny by Assembly Committees on a number of occasions. Most recently, the Equalities, Local Government and Communities Committee took evidence from the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children on [16 February 2017](#).

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

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-05-742
Ein cyf/Our ref CS/00134/17

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

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

 February 2017

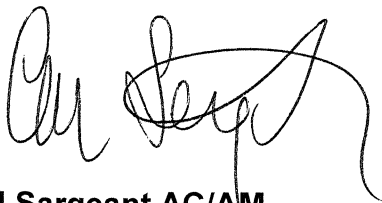
Dear Mike

Thank you for your letter of 24 January following your receipt of Petition P-05-742 "Stop Forsythia Closing".

I appreciate the concern of the young people and workers who have signed the petition but, when I made my statement on resilient communities on 11 October, I made clear I wanted to look at whether Communities First is still the most effective and appropriate way to tackle poverty and deliver for communities across Wales. In my statement, I also signalled the start of a broad programme of engagement to gather people's views on building resilient communities. An important part of the engagement has been to consider the possible impact of any potential future decisions on people, communities and community buildings and we have therefore gathered detailed assessments from our Communities First Lead Delivery Bodies.

The first part of the engagement programme, relating to the future of Communities First, closed on 15 January. After analysis of the responses, I will be making another statement in shortly.

Yours sincerely



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

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

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

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

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

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

Agenda Item 2.2

P-05-743 End the Exotic Pet Trade in Wales

This petition was submitted by David Sedley, having collected 222 signatures.

Text of the Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to take action against the trade in exotic animals captured and bred for the pet trade in Wales, and to forbid the licensing of all businesses involved in this destructive, cruel and unethical trade, with clear exemptions for rescue centres and licensed rescue centres. We further urge the Welsh Government to follow the example of the Scottish Government which committed to a review of the trade and importation of exotic animals for the pet trade in Scotland in February 2015, led by The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment. For Wales to be taken seriously in the global conservation community, we maintain that we cannot be seen to be allowing this trade – which elicits the concerns of the British Veterinary Association (BVA), The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) and the RSPCA – to continue in our own country.

Additional Information

Animals such as monkeys, meerkats, reptiles and turtles are wild animals who belong in their natural habitat, not in cages and glass tanks in somebody's home. Over 1000 species of mammals, birds, invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians and fish are bred and captured for the exotic pet trade, and it is our argument that the complex social, physical and behavioural needs of these animals cannot be met other than in their natural habitats. Furthermore, there is strong evidence linking the trade in exotic animals with habitat destruction and the extinction of species in the wild. In tandem with the suffering of such animals in transit – including many documented deaths – young animals can grow into dangerous adults which can become unmanageable in domestic environments not conducive to satisfying their welfare needs for increased space and food.

Assembly Constituency and Region.

- Swansea West
- South Wales West

Petition P-05-743: End the Exotic Pet Trade in Wales

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 7 Mawrth 2017

Petitions Committee | 7 March 2017

Research Briefing:

Petition number: P-05-743

Petition title: End the Exotic Pet Trade in Wales

Text of petition:

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to take action against the trade in exotic animals captured and bred for the pet trade in Wales, and to forbid the licensing of all businesses involved in this destructive, cruel and unethical trade, with clear exemptions for rescue centres and licensed rescue centres. We further urge the Welsh Government to follow the example of the Scottish Government which committed to a review of the trade and importation of exotic animals for the pet trade in Scotland in February 2015, led by The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment. For Wales to be taken seriously in the global conservation community, we maintain that we cannot be seen to be allowing this trade – which elicits the concerns of the British Veterinary Association (BVA), The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) and the RSPCA – to continue in our own country.

Animals such as monkeys, meerkats, reptiles and turtles are wild animals who belong in their natural habitat, not in cages and glass tanks in somebody's home. Over 1000 species of mammals, birds, invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians and fish are bred and captured for the exotic pet trade, and it is our argument that the complex social, physical and behavioural needs of these animals cannot be met other than in their natural habitats. Furthermore, there is strong evidence linking the trade in exotic animals with habitat destruction and the extinction of species in the wild. In tandem with the suffering of such animals in transit – including many documented deaths – young animals can grow into dangerous adults which can become unmanageable in domestic environments not conducive to satisfying their welfare needs for increased space and food.

Background

Exotic pets in Wales

The Welsh Government's [National Survey for Wales 2014–15](#) estimated that around 4.2% of households in Wales keep a bird as a pet, while 1.4% keep reptiles. An [RPSCA Cymru survey \(PDF 1.22 MB\)](#) in 2015 found that 9% of households in Wales own or have owned a parrot, snake, lizard or monkey. The [Pet Food Manufacturers' Association](#) (PFMA) estimates that in 2015 there were 1.3m indoor birds, lizards, snakes, tortoises and turtles kept as pets in the UK, while the [Federation of British Herpetologists \(PDF 2.99MB\)](#) estimates there are over 7 million pet reptiles and amphibians. In 2016, [Heathrow Animal Reception Centre](#) reported 200,000 reptiles arrived into the UK.

Concerns surrounding exotic pets

Exotic pets can have complex husbandry needs which can be challenging and expensive to manage, and access to specialist veterinary advice can be limited. Stakeholders raise concerns that purchasing pets without an adequate level of knowledge or preparation could lead to neglect or cruelty, even if unintentional. [RPSCA Cymru reports \(PDF 1.22 MB\)](#) that in 2014 it received 407 complaints of cruelty relating to fish, exotic birds and mammals in Wales. Between 2012 and 2014, the RSPCA prosecuted nine defendants in Wales for offences involving exotic pets. Incidents relating to exotic pets include a [Marmoset monkey found in Newport](#), a woman [bitten by a 3m-long python in Swansea](#), and a [bearded dragon sent by post to a pet shop in Cardiff](#). There are risks to human health and safety associated with dangerous or venomous species. [NHS Wales hospital admissions data](#) for 2015/16 includes six admissions relating to bites and contact with reptiles and spiders.

More recently, concerns have been raised over the rise of pet vending on the internet. It is suggested that the internet provides easy and instant access to a range of species, leading to potentially ill-informed purchases. Stakeholders argue that sellers are not subject to the same strict criteria as a licensed pet shop, leading to little protection for animals or for buyers. The ['One Click Away'](#) investigation found that at any one time, around 25,000 exotic pets were advertised for sale on six websites which were studied.

In its response to a recommendation from a [2013 inquiry on primates as pets](#), the [UK Government stated](#):

The Government considers that regardless of the age of the Pet Animals Act 1951, it still provides appropriate protection for the welfare of animals sold as pets. The 1951 Act makes clear that a pet shop is: the "*carrying on at premises of any nature (including a private dwelling) of a business of selling animals as pets...*". This would therefore include businesses selling primates over the internet. Even a business selling over the internet must have premises where the animals are held and therefore should be licensed and subject to inspection.

The response also pointed to the work of the [Pet Advertising Advisory Group](#) (PAAG). PAAG is endorsed by the Welsh Government and promotes responsible pet advertising through education and cooperation between welfare organisations and websites.

Legislation relating to exotic pets

Legislation in Wales

Section 9 of the [Animal Welfare Act 2006](#), which applies to England and Wales, places a duty of care on pet owners to care for their pets' basic needs, introduces tougher penalties for neglect and cruelty, and gives greater powers for enforcers to intervene. The letter to the Chair from the Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs regarding this petition refers to the fact that:

It is the owner's responsibility to exercise a duty of care and to be responsible. Severe penalties can be imposed by the courts for not fulfilling such obligations, although I recognise it is better to avoid problems than to deal with them.

[The Good Practice Guidelines for the Welfare of Privately Kept Reptiles & Amphibians \(PDF 2.99MB\)](#), which are endorsed by the UK Government, underpin the *Animal Welfare Act 2006*. Breach of the guidelines is not an offence in itself, but in the event of any charges brought under section 9 of the Act, the Court may refer to the guidelines. The [2010 Code of Practice for the Welfare of Privately Kept Non-Human primates \(the Primate Code\) \(PDF 771KB\)](#) applies to England only.

Under The [Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976](#), animal owners are required to possess a licence to keep [certain animals which are considered to be wild, dangerous or exotic](#). Licences are obtained from local authorities following an assessment of the owner and his/her premises.

The [Pet Animals Act 1951](#) protects the welfare of animals sold as pets, requiring any person keeping a pet shop to be licensed by the local council.

Section 14(1) of The [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#) makes it an offence to release or allow the escape of any non-native animal into the wild. Anyone intending to import a non-native species into the UK must [apply for a licence](#).

The [Zoo Licensing Act 1981 \(PDF 775 KB\)](#) requires the inspection and licensing of all zoos in Great Britain.

The [Welfare of Animals Transport \(Wales\) Order 2007](#) applies to the transport of vertebrate animals in connection with an economic activity.

Under current Welsh legislation, there are no measures to license animal welfare establishments (or 'sanctuaries'). A [2012 report \(PDF 2857 KB\)](#) by the [Animal Welfare Network Wales](#) highlighted concerns associated with the lack of regulation in this area. [An](#)

[article on the 'In Brief blog'](#) gives more details. The report led to a petition, details of which are given below in the section on 'National Assembly for Wales action'.

International trade law and conventions

The [Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna](#) (CITES) aims to ensure the trade in wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival. There are [several thousand controlled species](#), for which the import, export and use for commercial gain requires a permit. The designated [CITES Management Authority](#) in the UK is the Defra Wildlife division. The Animal and Plant Health Agency issues permits and certificates.

A [permanent ban on the import of wild-caught birds into the EU](#) was introduced in 2007. This was primarily a response to avian flu, but was praised by NGOs such as the [Wild Parrot Trust](#), the [RSPB](#) and [Animal Aid](#) for its welfare and conservation implications.

Animal licensing

Animal licensing is commonly managed by a 'negative list' approach, in which access to certain species is restricted or subject to licensing. The approach in the UK [consists of multiple negative lists](#), which leads to a requirement for cross-checking across different legislative requirements. Without continual updates, it is suggested that there is potential that legislation remains silent on emerging issues. An alternative approach is based on 'positive lists', where the species which are suitable to be kept by private individuals are identified on a single list. All other species are either prohibited or require a licence. The burden of proof is shifted to the pet industry, to provide scientific evidence that a species is suitable for pet-keeping. More information on the use of positive lists [can be found on the ENDCAP website](#).

Cited stakeholder concerns

The petition refers to concerns of three particular organisations: the British Veterinary Association (BVA), the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA).

RSPCA position

The RSPCA is part of the coalition of charities [campaigning for a ban on primates as pets](#). The Cabinet Secretary in her letter to the Chair noted this campaign, stating:

Arrangements are in place for my officials to discuss the RSPCA campaign in greater detail over the coming months.

In its report [Animal Welfare Issues for the Fifth Assembly](#), RSPCA Cymru recommended that the Welsh Government:

should undertake a wholesale review of legislation surrounding the dealing, trading and selling of animals; including a key focus of the regulation of animals sold online.

[Their report on wild animal welfare \(PDF 1.22 MB\)](#) calls for more funding to investigate the trade in exotic pets in Wales, for a system of licensing or registration for animal sanctuaries.

BVA position

The BVA has [expressed concern about the welfare and trade of exotic pets](#). In 2015, the BVA also issued a [joint position statement on non-traditional companion animals \(PDF 141 KB\)](#) with the British Small Animal Veterinary Society (BSAVA), British Veterinary Zoological Society (BVZS) and Fish Veterinary Society (FVS). The statement gives a number of recommendations surrounding regulation and enforcement, including a ban on the importation of wild caught reptiles and amphibians into the EU. The BVA is also part of the campaign to ban primates as pets.

FVE position

[FVE](#) is an umbrella organisation of veterinary organisations from 38 European Countries. In 2013, it [called on governments of European nations to restrict the keeping of exotic animals as pets](#).

Other organisations

There are also organisations campaigning to defend exotic pet-keeping. For example, the Federation of British Herpetologists runs the [‘Hands Off Our Hobby’ campaign](#) which was set up in response to the announcement of the Scottish Government review. The [‘Hands off my hobby’ campaign](#) by the Ornamental and Aquatic Trade Association (OATA) works to defend ornamental fish-keeping as a hobby.

The [Reptile and Exotic Pet Trade Association \(REPTA\)](#) was formed to represent the views of those within the trade who are concerned about the potential impacts of campaigns against exotic pets. The presentation [‘Overview of the Exotic Pet Trade in the UK’ \(PDF 3.74 MB\)](#) gives further details.

Scottish review on the trade and importation of exotic animals

The petition refers to action by the Scottish Government. In February 2015, Richard Lochhead, the Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment, [committed to a review](#) of trade and importation of exotic animals as pets. In November 2015, the Scottish Government held a [stakeholder meeting](#). The review was [raised in Scottish Parliament](#) (PQ S5W-04082) in November 2016. Roseanna Cunningham, Cabinet Secretary for the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform responded:

The review of the exotic pet trade is part of a wider review of pet welfare, which is a substantial and on-going piece of work. Initial meetings with stakeholders have already been held on exotic pets and breeding and sale of pets and further meetings are planned to discuss what the welfare challenges are and on how animal welfare might be best assured in various situations.

Once the review is completed, proposals for changes to the current legislation and/or policies relating to pet welfare will be developed and, in due course, consulted on. It is still too early in the process to suggest what those changes might be.

The letter to the Chair from the Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs regarding this petition, notes that the Welsh Government is awaiting the outcomes of the Scottish review. Activity in England is also noted, specifically actions to, “overhaul the licensing of animal establishments, including pet shops”.

Welsh Government action

The [Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework](#) is the Welsh Government’s plan for improving animal health and welfare standards for kept animals. The second iteration of this [annual implementation plan](#) spans 2016–17. In her letter to the Chair regarding this petition, the Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs refers to the implementation plan, highlighting its commitment to review Welsh Government Codes of Practice published under the *Animal Welfare Act 2006*. This also includes considering whether additional Codes of Practice are required for other species, for example, exotic animals. The Cabinet Secretary’s correspondence also notes the Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework Group established to support the implementation of the Framework and advise the Welsh Government on animal health and welfare issues.

In December 2016, the Cabinet Secretary issued a [written statement on Mobile Animal Exhibits, including Circuses](#) which gave details of the plans to develop a licensing or registration scheme to manage Mobile Animal Exhibits.

National Assembly for Wales action

The Fourth Assembly petition [P-04-500 Call for Regulation of Animal Welfare Establishments in Wales](#) called for compulsory regulation of animal rescue establishments. It was first considered by the Petitions Committee in September 2013, and was closed in January 2016. This resulted in a new review by the Animal Welfare Network Wales (AWNW), which produced [an addendum to the report which had originally led to the petition](#). The potential for a Code of Practice for exotic pets, to be included in the wider review of Animal Welfare Codes of Practice, was raised in a [meeting of the Committee for Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs](#) (CCERA) on 2 November 2016, during the evidence session with the Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs.

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

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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-743
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/00245/17

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

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

February 2017

Dear Mike

Thank you for your letter of 31 January regarding Petition P-05-743 – End the Exotic Pet Trade in Wales.

Animals currently kept in captivity are subject to the requirements of the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and particularly the duty of care set out in section 9 of this Act. It is the owner's responsibility to exercise a duty of care and to be responsible. Severe penalties can be imposed by the courts for not fulfilling such obligations, although I recognise it is better to avoid problems than to deal with them.

In addition, (with some exceptions), a licence has to be obtained under the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 (DWAA) to keep certain species. This involves an assessment being undertaken by the Local Authority to ensure the suitability of the owner and his/her premises for keeping the species. The DWAA can be found at:
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1976/38>

As you are aware the RSPCA Cymru issued a briefing document on 21st October 2016 calling for a ban on keeping primates as pets in Wales

Arrangements are in place for my officials to discuss the RSPCA campaign in greater detail over the coming months.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

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

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

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

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

I am aware of a review being undertaken in Scotland regarding the way in which exotic pets are traded. In England, proposals to overhaul the licensing of animal establishments, including pet shops, are being actioned. We await the review in Scotland with interest as there will be similarities across the UK.

A paper has been presented to the Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework Group for consideration on the trade of exotic pets. The Group, which was set up to support the implementation of the Framework and advise the Welsh Government on animal health & welfare issues and the paper will be discussed at a future meeting.

Within the Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework Implementation Plan for 2016-17, a commitment exists to review the Welsh Government's Codes of Practice as published under the Animal Welfare Act 2006. This includes considering whether additional Codes of Practice are required for other species, for example exotic animals. Breach of a provision of a Code is not an offence in itself, however, the Codes can be used as evidence in court proceedings for animal welfare offences.

Lesley Griffiths AC/AM

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

P-05-743 End the Exotic Pet Trade in Wales – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 28.02.17

Dear Mr Hedges,

Many thanks for your correspondence in reference to the consideration of my petition to end the sale of exotic pets in Wales (P-05-743), and for the copy of the response to your enquiry from Lesley Griffith AC/AM, Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs, received February 8.

I am grateful for this opportunity to direct your committee's attention to the following.

Ms Griffiths states that a paper on the exotic pet trade has been presented to the Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework (AHWF) group. Please see below the Government Implementation Plan 2016-17 concerning the Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework (AHWF) which gives a commitment to review the Welsh Government's Codes of Practice as published under the Animal Welfare Act 2006. This includes considering whether additional Codes of Practice are required for other species. I have attached a copy of the link for ease of reference: <http://gov.wales/docs/drah/publications/160804-animal-health-welfare-framework-2016-implementation-plan-en.pdf>

It is my understanding that the Framework Group is due to meet with a reptile specialist in a forthcoming meeting. In addition, the Chief Veterinary Officer for Wales (CVO) has historically added this topic to the agenda of a UK CVO meeting to commence a UK-wide discussion.

Whilst the AHWF briefing makes it clear that the Welsh Government can begin the process to revise the Animal Welfare Codes of Practice, no specific timescales are given. Also, there does not appear to have been any progress to tighten the rules, despite the Welsh Government having had devolved powers over budgets for the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) since 2011. APHA are an executive arm of the Department for Environment and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) who are very specific in their Code of Practice on implementing the Animal Welfare Act 2006 – you will find the link

here: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/218679/primate-cop.pdf

It should be possible to tighten the licensing process to ensure exotic pets are not housed with other animals and are kept in conditions appropriate to their natural

habitat, i.e. diet, temperature, bedding etc. Also, banning the import of exotic pets, thereby allowing these animals only to be traded within their existing country, would have the long-term impact of significantly reducing the industry in the UK, as well as sending out the clear message that such a trade, wherever perpetrated, is detrimental to the animals concerned and their environment. By tightening the guidelines we could, potentially, significantly reduce the number of exotic pets in Britain and thereby combat the industry domestically and abroad.

I would therefore ask that the following questions – further directed at the Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs – be foremost in the committee members' minds when considering the fate of my petition:

Will the Minister be undertaking a review of animal welfare, including the welfare of exotic pets?

What discussions have taken place between the Chief Veterinary Officer on behalf of the Minister and her counterparts in Scotland and England regarding the welfare of exotic pets?

What proposals does the Minister have to regulate the sale of exotic animals?

It may be of interest to you that 21 of 22 local authorities in Wales replied to my request for information regarding the number of licenses issued to businesses selling exotic pets (not including on the web). I can therefore report that there are 134 such licensed premises in Wales. Although I do not have the figures for the numbers of animals involved – that is, reptiles, birds, mammals and fish – it is clear that many thousands are being kept and traded. This situation – the capture, breeding, transportation, sale and care of wild animals, unsuited to lives as domestic pets in a northern clime – continues to need urgent redress.

As mentioned by Ms Griffiths in her letter to you, she is aware of the current review of the trade in exotic pets instigated by the Scottish Government. This was in response to the successful campaign launched by the charity One Kind and supported by the RSPCA, PDSA, Captured Animals Protection Society, Four Paws, Wild Futures, and Born Free Foundation amongst others. I am sure that a similar campaign here in Wales would attract an identical level of support. As I write, The Assembly is in receipt of a briefing document from RSPCA Cymru highlighting the unsuitability of keeping primates as pets, and calling for a ban on the practice.

At the very least, I am asking that the petition to end the exotic pet trade in Wales be considered for further actioning on the grounds that a wider debate of the

welfare issues occasioned by it are long overdue. I would urge that there be no complacency on the part of the committee, or concerned members thereof, as many thousands of captured wild, and domestically bred, animals are enduring unnatural and cruel lives in shops and domestic homes throughout the country, today and everyday.

I further ask the committee that short of asking The Assembly to debate a total end to the trade in exotic pets that it, at least, consider the introduction of a Positive List System. This would permit the keeping of an exotic pet only if its suitability to life in private ownership were incontrovertibly assessed by such a system using clear, transparent and evidence based criteria collated on species conservation, the dangers of invasive disease, ease of good husbandry – including proof of appropriate knowledge of needs and care – and the clear availability of care guidelines, and enforcement measures.

For your convenience I include the notification from the Scottish Government about the review instigated by The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment, Richard Lochhead:

<http://news.scotland.gov.uk/News/Review-of-exotic-pet-trade-15ea.aspx>

Thank you for your kind attention.

Sincerely, and faithfully yours,

David Sedley

Agenda Item 2.3

P-05-744 Stop Gazumping; Follow Scotland's Buying Process.

This petition was submitted by Victoria Bridle, having collected 18 signatures.

Text of the Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to review the way we buy and sell houses and to assess whether it would be possible to implement a system like Scotland's to stop gazumping.

Additional Information

My name is Victoria Bridle. My husband and I used to live in South East London and moved to North Wales about three and a half years ago. Just a few weeks ago we put in an offer on a house that we fell in love with, which was accepted so the House was Sold Subject To Contract. Our estate agent had told us that they told the other agent to take it off the market so it was no longer available for viewings or acceptances. Everything was going really well until we got told by our Estate Agent that the other agent had a phone call saying someone else put an offer in and that got accepted. So all we paid out was the Solicitors fees.

We setup this Petition to try and stop this from happening as we had everything including a Mortgage offer in place.

To top it off we even saw the Sellers on the Saturday with our 18 month old to have a final look around for fixtures and fittings. The sellers even told us what they wanted to leave for us and we shook on it too. When telling other people they had thought that Gazumping was illegal, clearly not.

To top it off I went in to this other agent the other day to ask if they had anything else on sale. They even tried giving to me the very house we got Gazumped on. So they are clearly trying to Gazump these people which is clearly wrong. Please sign this petition and pass it on to family and friends to sign to try and stop this from happening.

Assembly Constituency and Region.

- Clwyd West
- North Wales

Follow Scotland's home buying process

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 7 Mawrth 2017

Petitions Committee | 7 March 2017

Research Briefing:

Petition number: P-05-744

Petition title: Stop Gazumping; Follow Scotland's Buying Process

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to review the way we buy and sell houses and to assess whether it would be possible to implement a system like Scotland's to stop gazumping.

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Background

The system under which homes in Scotland are bought and sold is different from that used in Wales.

In England and Wales properties are generally marketed for sale by estate agents. The price will often be described as ‘offers in the region of...’ and offers are made through the selling estate agent. When an offer is accepted, it is done so ‘subject to contract’. Until contracts are exchanged either the vendor or the purchaser can withdraw from the transaction without penalty. Prior to contracts being exchanged, the prospective purchaser will normally commission a survey, undertake legal searches and arrange a mortgage if necessary. While a property is often withdrawn from the market when an offer is initially accepted, this is not always the case.

In Scotland, many solicitors are also estate agents. Solicitors will therefore market properties as well as handling conveyancing, although there are also independent estate agents. Properties are generally marketed at an ‘offers over’ price with a closing date or at a fixed price. The vendor needs to prepare a Home Report which must include a survey (including a valuation), an Energy Performance Certificate and a property information questionnaire completed by the vendor. Properties would generally be withdrawn from the market when an offer is accepted. The contract for the sale is then negotiated between the parties.

While gazumping (accepting an offer higher than one that has already been accepted) can happen in Scotland, it is rare because of the Law Society of Scotland’s [rules and guidance on conveyancing](#). This guidance applies equally to solicitors acting as estate agents, as to those acting in the conveyancing process.

The guidance notes that solicitors acting for a vendor should not accept subsequent instructions from the vendor to accept an offer from another party unless and until negotiations with the original offeror (prospective purchaser) have fallen through for bona fide reasons unconnected with the possible offer from another party. If the vendor wanted to accept a higher offer, without good reason, they would therefore need to instruct another solicitor (incurring additional costs). The guidance notes similar requirements when a prospective purchaser seeks to lower their offer.

Welsh Government action

The Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children has written to the Committee advising that this is not a devolved area and is therefore the responsibility of the UK Government.

UK Government action

There have been attempts to reform the home-buying process in England and Wales by the UK Government. Home Information Packs were introduced by Tony Blair's government, but were subsequently abolished by the coalition government led by David Cameron.

The current UK Government announced at the time of the 2015 Autumn Statement that it would publish a call for evidence on home buying, exploring options to modernise the process and provide consumers with different and potentially quicker, simpler, cheaper and more effective ways to buy and sell a home. Although the call for evidence was expected in 2016, it has not yet been issued. The recent UK Government [Housing White Paper](#) (which applies to policy in England only) says "We will also identify what more can be done to reduce delays and fees resulting from conveyancing to help ensure the market works better for home buyers".

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

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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-744
Ein cyf/Our ref CS/00181/17

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee

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

 February 2017

Dear Mike

Thank you for your letter of 31 January seeking my views on the issues raised within the petition of Victoria Bridle, "Petition P-05-744 Stop Gazumping; Follow Scotland's Buying Process".

In terms of the context, in Scotland, unlike Wales, properties are predominantly sold by solicitors rather than by estate agents. Solicitors there are bound by the rules of the Law Society of Scotland and, in an attempt to ensure that the Scottish property market was not blighted by the problems of gazumping, all solicitor firms are bound to follow the Society's Anti-Gazumping rules. This system is favoured by Scotland as it keeps incidents of gazumping at a very low level.

Home buying and selling matters, however, are not devolved to the Welsh Government, they remain the responsibility of the UK Government. The Committee may, therefore, wish to consider advising Ms Bridle that she should send her petition to the UK Government for consideration. In so doing, you may wish to advise her that the responsible Department within the UK Government is:

The Department for Communities and Local Government,
Fry Building,
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

Yours sincerely,

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

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

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

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

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

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

Agenda Item 3.1

P-04-475 Wanted – Buses for Meirionnydd

Petition wording:

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

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

Petition raised by: Barbara Snowball

Date petition first considered by Committee: 30 April 2013

Number of signatures : 174

Agenda Item 3.2

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

Petition wording:

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

Petition raised by: Karen Dunford

Date petition first considered by Committee: 11 November 2013

Number of signatures: 494

Agenda Item 3.3

P-04-515 Increase Funding for Welsh Bus Services

Petition wording:

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

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

Petition raised by: Daniel Thomas

Date petition first considered by Committee: 26 November 2013

Number of signatures: 246

Agenda Item 3.4

P-04-686 Install a Traffic Lights System at Cross Hands Roundabout

This petition was submitted by Rhodri James, having collected 27 online signatures.

Text of the Petition

A recent published statistic shows that Cross Hands roundabout is the 3rd most dangerous in Wales for traffic accidents and people hurt. Anyone who is based in the area or travels through regularly will know how treacherous it has become. Please sign and share to force through a resolution.

Additional information

Opposition argue that traffic lights will slow down an already busy road. Carmarthen and Pont Abraham roundabouts had traffic lights installed long ago and congestion in both locations is not a serious issue. As the roads get busier, it is only a matter of time before somebody gets seriously hurt. Please let common sense prevail and help force through action to make this stretch of road a great deal safer for all motorists.

Assembly Constituency and Region

Carmarthen East and Dinefwr

Mid and West Wales

Agenda Item 3.5

P-05-729 Removal of M4 Speed Restrictions at the Brynglass Tunnels.

This petition was submitted by Andrew Lewis, which collected 15 signatures.

Text of the Petition

Since 2011 there have been speed restrictions placed in and around the Brynglas Tunnels on east and westbound M4 carriageways causing misery for countless motorists on a daily basis. It is proposed to remove all speed restrictions in this area and revert back to the national speed limit in both east and west directions.

Assembly constituency and Region

- Caerphilly
- South Wales East

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-05-729
Ein cyf/Our ref KS/00404/17

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee

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

18 February 2017

Dear

Thank you for your further letter of 1 February regarding petition P-05-729 Removal of M4 Speed Restrictions at the Brynglas tunnels.

No assessment of the impact of the variable speed limit in operation on the M4 around Newport has been carried out. However, we have been collecting data following the introduction of the enforcement system in September 2016 and propose to conduct a 12 month review.

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

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400
Gohebiaeth.Ken.Skates@llyw.cymru
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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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

Agenda Item 3.6

P-05-733 No Further Actions on Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZ) In Wales At All.

This petition was submitted by Nicola Savage, which collected 30 online signatures and over 400 paper signatures. An associated petition on Change.org collected 497 signatures.

Text of the Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to take no further actions on NVZ in Wales at all. Bringing this directive in would put enormous pressure on an already crippled dairy farming industry and the wider rural communities. We are the backbone of the Welsh Economy, No Farmers, No Food

Assembly constituency and Region.

- Preseli Pembrokeshire
- Mid and West Wales

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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-733
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/06921/16

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

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

13

December 2016

Dear Mike

Thank you for your letter of 2 December regarding Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) in Wales.

The Nitrates Directive (1991) (The Directive) aims to protect water quality by preventing nitrates from agricultural sources polluting ground and surface waters and by promoting the use of good farming practices. Measures introduced under the Directive in Wales intend to safeguard both human health and the natural environment, for example by avoiding or reducing pollution by toxic substances in drinking water and reducing eutrophication of watercourses. The European adopted targets for Nitrate levels reflect international World Health Organisation guidance which the Welsh Government means to follow.

The main objectives of the Directive are compatible with the Welsh Government's sustainability principles enshrined in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. Legislation introduced under the Directive is one of the key instruments in achieving improved water quality across Wales and reducing the impact of intensive agricultural practices on our environment.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

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

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

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

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

The Directive gives Member States the option to designate discrete targeted NVZs or to adopt a whole territory approach whereby all land within Wales will be subject to the action programme.

I am currently consulting on the implementation of the Nitrates Directive in Wales and the consultation closes on 23 December.

This consultation document invites opinions from individuals and organisations on:

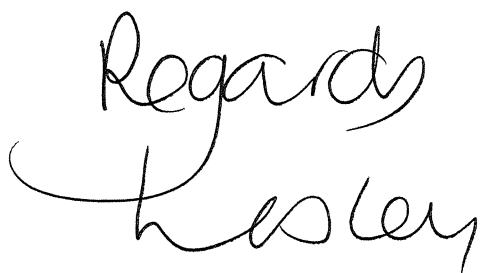
- options for future designation of NVZs – a targeted approach to designation of discrete NVZ areas or applying the action programme throughout the whole of Wales.
- Proposals to modify the Action Programme measures implemented within the NVZs.

These proposed new areas follow the latest evidence and data from Natural Resources Wales about waters in Wales which are classed as nitrate polluted waters under the current Nitrate Pollution Prevention (Wales) Regulations 2013.

Implementation of the proposals in the Action Programme following the designation process will contribute to an integrated approach to tackling diffuse pollution in water courses. This will, in turn, contribute to meeting other water quality requirements and the Welsh Government's wider aspirations for the environment in Wales.

The Action Programme proposals in this consultation document are underpinned by detailed scientific evidence generated through research commissioned by the Department for Environment and Rural Affairs (Defra) to inform the implementation of the Nitrates Directive in the UK. The existing Action Programme measures and the additional measures contained within this consultation are likely to have greatest operational and financial impact upon dairy and beef farming practices. This is a proportionate response. Between 2010 and 2015, an average of 61% of recorded agricultural pollution incidents per year, were from dairy farms and 19% from beef farms.

The consultation exercise will help the Welsh Government to develop its policies for tackling water pollution with the aim to reduce Nitrate levels in water courses. The UK's withdrawal from the European Union may provide an opportunity in the future to review our approach to tackling diffuse pollution in agriculture. However, it will be imperative for any future policy decision not to have a detrimental effect on public health and Wales' natural resources.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Regards Lesley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lesley Griffiths AC/AM

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

01 March 2017



Dear Sir

Please find attached response to Lesley Griffiths comments regarding Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZ) in Wales

The safeguard to Human Health was included in the ministers comments, , in the case of the proposed Milford designation there is a need to be clear this is a eutrophic designation rather than surface or ground water designation where the levels of nitrates are a magnitude lower (less than a quarter of the levels)

In addition the British Survey of Fertiliser Practice shows the use of nitrate fertiliser in England and Wales has followed a general declining trend since the mid-1980s. The overall reduction in Nitrate use since its peak is 32% with the use of Nitrate by grassland farmers declining by 61% and by 8% on tillage land over this time period. There has also been an overall decline in the amount of manure produced due to a decline in livestock numbers and more efficient production systems. There has been a 21% reduction in nitrogen input from manures since 1990

A comment was made that the main objectives of the directive was that it would be compatible with Welsh Government sustainability principles enshrined in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015, and Environment (Wales) Act on the rural communities of. 2015) and the Environment Wales Act 2016. This is not the case, specifically, the Well-being of Future Generations places an emphasis on the economic, environmental, social and cultural well-being of Wales – no information has been provided through a regulatory impact assessment on the economic impact of proposals – nor the social and cultural impact Pembrokeshire.

A large proportion of Young people are employed in the Agricultural sector or businesses that rely on it, if this Directive is implicated those Young Welsh Speaking people will be forced to move from their home counties to find work else where thus leaving our Pembrokeshire a giant "Center Parcs" for seasonal visitors, and a retirement area for city people with no connection or interest in our rural way of life.

The Milford designation is eutrophic and levels of nitrates are a magnitude lower than drinking water standards this is not a public health issue at all. In terms of Wales natural resources – designation is likely to lead to unintended negative consequences for the environment. WG have provided no evidence whatsoever on the extent to which the Action Programme is expected to be effective in reducing levels of nitrates. Overall the a decision to designate will go against the Well-Being of Future Generations Act and the duty on public bodies to ensure the economic, environmental, social and cultural well-being of Wales, the Environment Wales Act provides opportunities to suspend regulation to explore alternative approaches why is WG not pursuing this?

The Nitrates Directive approach and measures taken to comply do not support the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and the collaborative evidence-based principles of working it establishes. A sustainable management of natural resources approach would examine all the sources of Nitrates and seek to address Water Framework Directive failures in the round using collaborative approaches.

It is clear from the evidence that a focus which imposes costly regulation on one sector will not, on its own, deliver good chemical or ecological status in line with WFD. The Nitrates Directive does not refer to other drivers of WFD failures or say what steps will be taken to address these. NVZ designations and the implementation of the Action Programme cannot be considered to represent an integrated or indeed a partnership approach to tackling diffuse pollution in water courses.

Further – the requirements of the Action Programme will lead to unintended adverse consequences in the environment with spikes in nitrate levels immediately prior to and after the closed period. No information has been provided on the extent to which the Action Programme is expected to be effective in reducing levels of nitrates in the Milford. There is a requirement to do this under the terms of the Directive.

The Action Programme will be costly to farm businesses and difficult to comply with. Farmer concerns can be broadly categorised as costs associated with designation – both upfront in terms of slurry storage and ongoing; demonstrating compliance with the NVZ Action Programme; together with concerns about restrictions on day-to-day farming operations. The Nitrates Directive reduces farmers' ability to make good management decisions relating to resource management based on their knowledge of their own farm, prevailing weather and ground conditions.

The letter refers to the fact that Action Programme Proposals have been underpinned by detailed scientific evidence. We know that at the time of consultation the research had not been finalised or made public!

We are Agricultural Contractors and employ up to 9 members of staff 12 months of the year. Should the directive be implicated we will have to close our business in October and reopen in February, in that time I would assume that those staff and their families would have moved out of the area to find work therefore taking their knowledge and abilities elsewhere.

With respect I was privileged enough to listen to Lesley Griffiths in the chamber at the Senedd in December and when the question was asked regarding the Contractors situation she commented that she had spoken to many in the "Construction Industry" I feel that possibly she hasn't been informed of our existence!

I have invited the Minister to meet with me to discuss this further and work together on this Directive my invitation as been declined. There are many other alternatives that we could implement which would allow the Directive to go ahead with minimal cost and damage to the Rural Communities.

Thank you

Nicola Savage

Agenda Item 3.7

P-04-532 Improving specialised neuromuscular services in Wales

Petition wording:

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to ensure that Health Boards implement the investment proposed by the Welsh Neuromuscular Network Vision Document for improving specialised neuromuscular services in Wales.

Additional Information:

The Welsh Neuromuscular Network is recommending the following priority developments: 1. Increase in Family Care Advisors and support. 2. Specialist adult neuromuscular physiotherapists. 3. Appointment of consultant in adult neuromuscular disease. 4. Increase in clinical psychology. 5. An equipment budget to enable minor purchases and lease arrangements.

Petition raised by: Muscular Dystrophy Campaign

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 4 February 2014

Mike Hedges AM
Chair, Petitions Committee
Tŷ Hywel
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

17 January 2017

Dear Mike,

Petition P-04-532 Improving Specialised Neuromuscular Services in Wales


In my letter of 1 November 2016 I informed you that the Committee had agreed to write to the Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing and Sport to seek an update on the specific actions the Welsh Government is taking as relevant to this Petition.

We have now received a response to this request, which I attach for your information.

Unfortunately due to the commitments already given to future inquiries, we are unable at this time to include this matter within our work programme. We will, of course, keep our work programme under review, and should a suitable slot arise, we could consider this matter again.

I hope you find this information helpful.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Dai Lloyd AM
Chair, Health, Social Care and Sport Committee



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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref: Petition P-04-532
Ein cyf/Our ref: MA-P/VG/7843/16

Dr Dai Lloyd AM
Chair, Health, Social Care and Sport Committee
The National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

8 December 2016

Dear Dai,

Thank you for your letter of 10 November regarding the petition (Petition P-04-532) about improving Specialised Neuromuscular Services in Wales.

As you note in your letter, the Neurological Conditions Implementation Group (NCIG) is refreshing the Neurological Conditions Delivery Plan, due to be published in summer 2017. Further work to develop and improve the contents of the refreshed Delivery Plan is underway. This will shape the policy of care and services across the health boards. The Welsh Neuromuscular Network (WNMN) and third sector organisations via the Wales Neurological Alliance are represented on the Neurological Conditions Implementation Group and as such will have an opportunity to inform the content.

This year, the Neurological Implementation Group has invested £120,000 from the £1 million funding it received from Welsh Government to provide additional physiotherapy and family care advisor time. Whilst there have been some recruitment delays, I understand that the WNMN, in conjunction with health boards, are now pressing ahead with the appointments of a neuromuscular specialist physiotherapist in South Wales and additional Band 6 Family Care Advisor time in all three regions. Together with the Stroke Implementation Group, it has also invested £1.2million in the development of neurorehabilitation services across Wales which should benefit people with neuromuscular conditions.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

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

Gohebiaeth.Vaughan.Gething@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Vaughan.Gething@gov.wales

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

The WNMN has used the improving specialised neuromuscular services in Wales Vision Document to engage with health boards and other partners with regard to key objectives and planning requirements. The WNMN has presented a case to the health boards for further investment to sustain the services and is seeking for this to be included the health boards Integrated Medium Term Plans for 2017-18.

I am aware the WNMN has highlighted in the longer-term there is the need for both additional neuromuscular specialist staff and improved access to generic rehabilitation services and the work they are doing to address these concerns by cross working with exemplar networks in Scotland and South West England. I understand WNMN is also developing a service map for access to specialist and generic services for each health board, including cross-boundary working.

I hope my response demonstrates the Welsh Government recognises the importance of providing safe and sustainable services for people with neuromuscular conditions in Wales.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vaughan Gething". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Vaughan Gething AC/AM

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

**P-04-532 Improving Specialised Neuromuscular Services in Wales.doc –
Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Clerking team, 01.03.17**

Dear Kayleigh,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please see below our comment submission:

We welcome the Minister's comments and we acknowledge the progress which has been made on increasing neuromuscular care advisor and physiotherapy support for people with muscular dystrophy and neuromuscular conditions.

However, this should not be viewed as the end of service developments which are required to build sustainable long-term provision. These include additional physiotherapy support, psychology support and dedicated neuromuscular consultant time.

We therefore urge Health Boards to adopt the service requirements for neuromuscular services which have been put forward into their Integrated Medium Term Plans and to take into account the savings of avoiding unplanned emergency admissions to hospital by investing in specialist multi-disciplinary care.

We also seek assurance that:

- a national decision-making forum with resources is sufficiently aware of service risks and thereby assign an informed priority to the situation;*
- neuromuscular services are included within the scope of the national review of neurosciences in Wales being led by WHSSC..*

Regards,

Jonathan

Agenda Item 3.8

P-04-570 Inequitable Access to Treatments That Have Not Been Nationally Appraised in NHS Wales

Petition Wording

We the undersigned call on the National Assembly for Wales to review the use of the "exceptionality rule" in determining whether a patient can access a treatment through the Individual Patient Funding Request process.

Additional Information: To access treatments through the IPFR process, a patient population must demonstrate its exceptionality. For common illnesses, it may be possible to identify a subset of patients within the larger population who are more likely to respond to a particular therapy. For rare disease patients, demonstrating that you are a unique patient when you are part of a small group of patients whose condition is considered rare is practically impossible. The exceptionality criteria place an onus on clinicians to provide evidence that the patient's clinical condition is significantly different to the general population of patients with the same condition and is likely to gain significantly more benefit from the intervention than might normally be expected. This evidence requirement is too onerous to apply to patients with rare diseases due to small patient numbers within rare disease populations. Patients with great clinical need are prevented from accessing life-changing/ life-saving treatments.

Petition raised by: Genetic Alliance UK, Tuberous Sclerosis Association, Association of Glycogen Storage Disorders

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 15 July 2014

Number of signatures: 1089

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

Document is Restricted

Agenda Item 3.9

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

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

Text of the Petition

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

Assembly Constituency and Region

- South Wales Central
- Cardiff West

Agenda Item 3.10

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

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

Text of the Petition

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

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

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Pontypridd
- South Wales Central

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

Dear Mr Hedges,

Petition P-05-693 – Give every child in Wales the Meningitis B vaccine for free

Thank you for your letter of 2 November seeking the views of Meningitis Now and Meningitis Research Foundation on the petition raised by Rhian Cecil. Meningitis is the disease that parents fear the most. It is a disease that is notably complex and difficult to diagnose. Onset is rapid and if it's not effectively diagnosed and treated, those affected may die or be left with long-term and severe after-effects.

We know from Public Health England (PHE) data, that children aged up to five years represent the biggest meningococcal B (Men B) at-risk group with 57% of disease cases occurring in this age group. Very young children cannot explain their symptoms and, as many stories serve to illustrate, parents frequently lack the confidence to ask for a second medical opinion.

The impact on families and, indeed, the community is far-reaching. Today, 500,000 people in the UK have been affected by meningitis. We know that 1 in 10 children who get Men B will die and 1 in 3 of those who survive will suffer from long-term effects such as limb loss, scarring, brain acquired injury and emotional/mental health issues.

The petition before the Welsh Assembly offers legislators a unique opportunity to independently respond to the wishes of its people and to protect children in Wales who make up this at-risk group. We know there are barriers to extending the vaccine programme, including unfair frameworks for assessing how cost effective the vaccine is measured and issues around current vaccine supply. We are working to reduce these barriers and your support on these issues will save lives.

As you are aware, a similar petition in March this year drew down over 823,000 signatures; including many thousands from Wales. At that time both Meningitis Research Foundation and Meningitis Now worked together in providing evidence to a joint Petitions and Health Committee. During one of these sessions we presented a 10 point action plan detailing our main concerns. This document included a recommended course of action that could, if adopted, provide a route to completing the science required to undertake a Men B carriage study amongst adolescents, give clarity to the issues around vaccine cost effectiveness and a way to extend the Men B vaccine to children up to the age of five. A copy of this document is attached for your reference.

With regards to the substantive issue raised by the petition and the subsequent debate in England, this being the call to extend the use of Men B vaccine, this was rejected by the Health Minister, citing cost effectiveness as the reason for this decision.

During the debate, the Minister confirmed that she had asked the Joint Committee on Vaccinations and Immunisation (JCVI) to undertake a cost effectiveness assessment for children up to two years of age. In August this year, the JCVI announced that it had found this assessment to be cost effective, but wouldn't recommend vaccination of two year olds due to vaccine procurement issues. We also know that the JCVI has conducted a further study to assess vaccine cost effectiveness against children aged three to five. Using the current assessment framework this study did not find in favour of vaccination.

We think it would be fair to say that both the initial rejection by the Health Minister and the JCVI's subsequent rejections were not well received by those who signed the petition!

To ensure that you are fully aware of the issues that the combined charities are pursuing with PHE, we have also attached a copy of a submission made to the newly inaugurated APPG for Meningitis. This document outlines and updates a number of key meningitis issues included in the 10 point action plan and they are therefore relevant to your discussions around Men B.

In order to more fully understand the impact of meningitis we would urge you to talk with families in Wales who have suffered the consequences of the disease and consider the peace of mind benefits that undertaking such a vaccine programme could deliver. Should you seek assistance with this, please do not hesitate to contact us.

We are grateful for the opportunity to comment on the petition raised by Rhian Cecil.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Hunt – Director of Communications Meningitis Now

Rob Dawson – Head of Communications, Advocacy and Support

Att:

Meningitis Now and Meningitis Research Foundation joint submissions:

1. 10 Point Action Plan to the joint Health and Petitions Committee
2. Briefing paper to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Meningitis



ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP ON MENINGITIS

Notes for the inaugural meeting - 25th October 2015

Tuesday 25th October, 12.00 – 13.30

Room R, Portcullis House

Liz Brown:

Group Purpose:

To provide a forum for MPs and Peers to work on behalf of people affected by meningitis, raising issues of concern with Government and other policy makers and keeping meningitis high on the political agenda.

Objectives and Aims of Briefing

In March 2016, we presented a 10 point action plan to the joint Health and Petitions committee as part of an evidence session following the e-petition to extend use of the Men B vaccine. The plan contained a series of measures to help and enable policy makers to meet the three core concerns the charities had:

1. The unfairness of the cost effectiveness framework
2. Completing the Men B adolescent carriage study
3. Protecting the most vulnerable with an effective vaccine

Based on information available at that time, the plan detailed a series of actions and time frames that would, if adopted, help achieve the 10 point action plan. During the subsequent debate more details and information on timeframes emerged; the core argument and call for action, however, remained unchanged.

Today, we would like to revisit and update you on these key issues and in doing so seek the support of APPG members in asking the Health Committee to hold ministers to account for the commitments they have made. We will also update you on the uptake of the Men ACWY vaccine amongst teenagers.

Claire Wright:

1. **Men B Cost effectiveness** - The consultation and publication of the Cost-Effectiveness Methodology for Immunisation Programmes and Procurements (**CEMIPP**) Working Group report. We know that:

- a. The final report was given to the Department of Health on 20th July 2016.
- b. The Secretary of State for Health, Jeremy Hunt MP and the Under Secretary of State for Health, Lord Prior, have both said that public consultation would be considered.
- c. Previous Health Minister Jane Ellison MP confirmed that she would publish the report and provide the Petitions and Health Committees with a written briefing summarising the report and the Government's proposed next steps in the summer.
- d. In our action plan we asked for ministerial level commitment to funding research into how peace of mind health benefits can be included in the cost effectiveness framework.

Despite these assurances, a decision as to whether this much-awaited report will be put out for consultation or a publication date has not been forthcoming. We would ask APPG members to raise this with Health Select Committee and for them to DH/PHE:

- **Why consultation was not sought?**
- **What is causing the delay in publishing the report?**
- **When will the report be published?**

We would remind APPG members, many of whom spoke passionately during the parliamentary debate in support of extending the Men B vaccine, that the hope and aspirations of the 823,000 people who signed the parliamentary e-petition are, in-part, pinned on outcomes of this report and for the Department of Health to continue to delay a decision on consultation and publication is simply unacceptable.

- 2. Men B teenage carriage study** - Seek assurances and commitment from the government to deliver on its plans to undertake this important and urgent study to determine whether vaccinating teenagers against Men B could prevent them from carrying and transmitting the infection to others. In order for this larger study to go ahead as promised, we are asking members to seek confirmation that effective planning is or is about to take place and that:

- a. **The required budgetary commitment has been secured? – We understand that Department of Health R&D budget cannot pay for vaccines.**
- b. **That a timetable to aid planning has been agreed and can we see this?**
- c. **Enough Men B vaccine is being procured to enable the study to commence as announced by Jane Ellison in December 2017. We know that GSK require approximately 12 months to produce and supply the significant volumes that will be required. If this is not the case then why not?**
- d. **That the reported delays in completing preliminary investigations that would inform the larger study, will not impact on the commencement of the full study.**

Liz Brown:

- 3. Men B awareness programme** – As part of her response to the Parliamentary debate Jane Ellison said: *'I have asked PHE to develop a national awareness campaign that will focus on the dangerous infections parents most worry about – meningitis, septicaemia and sepsis - and the symptoms they need to look out for.'*

In response, the three charities have been working collaboratively in partnership with PHE to achieve a meaningful response to this campaign challenge. Research carried out by PHE in April

2016 targeting parents with young children indicate high levels of disease awareness amongst this group, so awareness, as a standalone response was considered not to be the only need. With the additional pressure of trying to deliver a stand-alone campaign for this winter season, the charities and PHE have agreed to:

- a. Undertake a research study to establish how to move parents from awareness to action be it knowing signs and symptom, taking urgent action and/or challenging clinical response if the parent remains concerned. This research reflects PHE best practice in planned journey change methodology. This research is underway and will report after Christmas.
 - b. During discussions with PHE it was agreed that the timeframe for the delivery of the awareness programme would be a challenge and it was agreed in principle that PHE consider direct investment into the charities behind a joint safety netting proposal and independent awareness campaigns that leverage their proven ability to successfully run such programmes. Both meningitis charities have independently made campaign submissions to PHE for review, as have the Sepsis Trust.
4. **Extending the Men B vaccine** – As part of the debate process, it was stated that the JCVI had been asked by the Minister to carry out a cost-effective review of giving Men B to children aged 2. In July the JCVI announced its findings saying *‘that while the lifesaving Men B vaccine could prove cost effective for children aged between 13 and 24 months, there is insufficient supply of the vaccine to offer it to children in this age group without jeopardising stocks of the vaccine set aside for the existing NHS immunisation programme. For this reason they (JCVI) were unable to recommend extending implementation of the vaccine to all children under age 2’*.

This news was poorly received by the people who had signed the petition to extend the vaccine and highlights the critical need for high level discussions and planning between the DH and industry when forecasting vaccine supply, manufacturing capacity and issues that affect these.

Given the issues over supply and effective planning, we would ask APPG members to:

- **Call on DH to instruct JCVI to carry out an immediate cost effectiveness study for children aged between 36 and 48 months and 48 to 60 months – these being the remaining cohorts who are considered to be most at risk?**
- **Should DH find reason not to instruct such a study, we would ask that DH is held to account and asked to provide a formal statement detailing the reasons for such a decision, so that we can help provide answers to those who signed the petition.**

5. **Men ACWY** – Vaccine level uptake amongst young adults aged 17 and 18 year olds in England remains stubbornly low with only 17% of this year’s cohort in England having taken up the vaccine offer.

The data^{*1} published by PHE on 19 September also shows large regional variations from at best 28% in parts of the West Country to at worst 9.9% in parts of London.

The position in Scotland is the polar opposite with the Scottish Government not offering the vaccine to students studying in Scotland. Scotland completed the catch-up programme for the ACWY vaccine during 2015/16. This was completed using both schools and GPs to deliver the vaccine and has achieved an uptake rate of between 70-80%.

^{*1} *Health Protection Report* Vol. 10 No. 32 – 23 September 2016

Meningitis Now & Meningitis Research Foundation are calling for protection for all and fair access to vaccines

Repeated Department of Health surveys have shown that meningitis* is the disease that parents fear the most; it strikes fast without warning; there is no time for mistakes in diagnosis; it has a high fatality rate; it particularly affects young children; it has life-long disabling after affects and the potential for improved outcomes through treatment is limited. **Prevention ensures that lives are saved.**

The UK leads the way in the fight against meningitis. The immunisation and surveillance programmes in the UK are world class and we should be proud of the lives that have been saved and disabilities prevented over the years. **But we still have a long way to go.**

The public are sick of seeing this getting stuck in political mud. We are asking government to:

1. Address the unfairness of the cost effectiveness framework for preventing severe childhood illness and ensure that the peace of mind health benefits of vaccination are included in the framework.
2. Secure commitment to funding and delivery of the adolescent intervention study with MenB vaccine.
3. Prioritise effective protection for the most vulnerable in the short term by undertaking a one off catch-up for children under 5.

Since licensure in Jan 2013 the Joint Committee on Vaccination & Immunisation (JCVI) have made three recommendations to the Secretary of State for Health. These recommendations and current status are:

JCVI Date	JCVI Recommendation	Status as at March 18 2016
June 2013 and Feb 2014	A population based evaluation of Bexsero® in adolescents is required. 1 in 4 teenagers carry these bacteria harmlessly in the back of the nose and throat. Vaccinating this group would be the most cost effective approach if it prevents acquisition of the bacteria and generates herd protection across all age groups (by reducing carriage and preventing spread).	Preliminary study in progress to determine the most effective design for the main study. No indication of commitment to funding the main study or of timescales
Oct 2013	Establishment of a working group to review the cost effectiveness framework used for vaccines especially when related to rare but serious diseases in children	Cost-Effectiveness Methodology For Immunisation Programmes and Procurements (CEMIPP) working group formed early in 2015 but with different terms of reference to what had been expected. Still awaiting report and recommendations to enable us to determine whether it is addressing the fundamental issues.
Feb 2014	Introduce the vaccine for babies, subject to a cost effective price being agreed	Immunisation programme commenced on 1 Sept 2015 for all babies born from 1 May 2015 following a year-long price negotiation.

Petition & Health Committees – Ten point action plan

We propose the following plan is monitored by the Petition & Health Committees to avoid further delay:

Addressing the unfairness of the cost effectiveness framework

1. **April 2016:** Publication of first draft of recommendations from the CEMIPP working group.
2. **June 2016:** A commitment at ministerial level for funding research into how peace of mind health benefits can be included in the cost effectiveness framework¹. The petition demonstrates how much the public value vaccines that prevent severe disease. If there is no agreed mechanism for including peace of mind benefits of vaccination then research should be commissioned urgently to address this.
3. **June 2016:** Deadline for public consultation on the first draft of CEMIPP recommendations.
4. **September 2016:** Recommendations and amendments to draft report post consultation and proposed implementation plan to be presented to the Health and Petitions Committees.

Completing the adolescent intervention study

5. **April 2016:** A Department of Health commitment at ministerial level for funding a teenage intervention study to be provided in writing to the Health & Petition Committees.
6. **May 2016:** Plan outlining timescales for completion of the following to be presented to Health & Petitions Committees:
 - a. preparatory study
 - b. commissioning and design of the intervention study
 - c. intervention study and subsequent reporting
 - d. consideration of findings by JCVI and subsequent recommendations
7. **September 2016:** Quarterly progress reports to be provided to Health & Petitions Committees until completion.

Protecting the most vulnerable with an effective vaccine – under 5s one off catch up programme

8. **Spring 2016:** Report to be produced for Health & Petitions Committees on Men B vaccine supply and any likely issues for an under 5 catch up programme.
9. **Autumn 2016:** First year effectiveness data for the vaccination of babies to be made public.
10. **October 2016:** Catch up campaign for under 5s to be reconsidered by the JCVI in the light of a fairer cost effectiveness framework and emerging data on vaccine effectiveness, and Health & Petitions Committees to be updated on recommendations.

Supporting our call

- Public demand for this vaccine is unprecedented as evidenced by the largest ever parliamentary petition demanding wider vaccine roll out.
- There is already trial evidence that this vaccine should work now and early indicators of whether the under 1's programme is working in practice could be available as early as this Autumn.
- The current cost effectiveness framework used to assess vaccines is particularly unfair for uncommon severe disease in children, but it will take time to address these problems.
- There were significant bureaucratic delays to introducing the under 1's vaccine in the first place resulting in unnecessary death and suffering.
- If, as we hope and expect, Autumn results show that the vaccine works in a mainstream programme then denying this to under 5's will be only on the grounds of a defective cost effectiveness framework. We cannot stand by and watch more lives be lost whilst this is rectified.
- A vaccine shortage means that realistically, any catch-up programme given the go ahead now could not happen right away. However, the Government should be ready to act as soon as we have results from the first year of vaccine implementation.

1. Cost Effectiveness Methodology for Immunisation Programmes and Procurements Working Group - Terms of Reference

Agenda Item 3.11

P-04-481 Close the Gap for deaf pupils in Wales

Petition wording:

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to develop a national strategy to Close the Gap in educational attainment between deaf pupils and their peers.

The National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) Cymru presents this petition today as it is both Deaf Awareness Week and two years since 55 AMs pledged to take action to Close the Gap for deaf pupils.

Still, Welsh Government statistics demonstrate significant attainment gaps between deaf pupils and their peers. In 2012, deaf pupils were 26% less likely to achieve 5 GCSEs at A*-C, and 41% less likely to achieve A*-C passes in core subjects English/Welsh, Maths and Science.

Our video petition asks the experts (deaf pupils themselves) what matters most. They told us:

- We need appropriate support in school and college
- We need all classrooms to have good acoustics
- Some of us use sign language. Help us encourage our hearing peers and teachers to learn sign.
- We need more teachers and pupils to be deaf aware.

Too many deaf pupils are facing barriers in these areas. A national strategy is needed to address the barriers and Close the Gap!

Additional Information

Our video petition and an accompanying report can be downloaded at www.ndcs.org.uk/ClosetheGapWales

The video petition was produced with the help of eight deaf young people outlines the four things that they feel are most important to deaf pupils at school and college.

The accompanying report outlines the barriers that many deaf pupils in Wales are facing in these areas. It also makes suggestions on how a strategy could help to overcome these barriers.

Petition raised by: NDCS

Date petition first considered by Committee: 14 May 2013



Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-481
Ein cyf/Our ref ARD/05560/16

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

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

January 2017

Thank you for your letter of 13 December to the Cabinet Secretary for Education seeking her views on the petition '*Close the Gap for Deaf Pupils in Wales*', in particular relating to the areas of improving classroom acoustics and raising deaf awareness among teachers and pupils. I am responding as this matter falls within my portfolio.

The Welsh Government is committed to creating an inclusive education system for all learners, regardless of their needs and background, to ensure all learners are able to access a high standard of education and reach their full potential. For those with special educational needs (SEN) such as hearing impairments, we recognise the need to ensure appropriate interventions are in place to support their access to education.

The importance of ensuring that all learning environments have good acoustic standards is highlighted within the current terms and conditions of the 21st Century Schools Programme. All agreement letters require a closing report which includes a provision of compliance under Building Bulletin 93, including acoustics. Please be assured that there is no intention of weakening this condition of funding in relation to future 21st Century Schools investment.

With regard to raising deaf awareness among teachers and pupils, a key element of our overall reform agenda is to introduce a new, more rigorous approach to the accreditation of programmes of Initial Teacher Education (ITE), and that these should be governed by the Education Workforce Council (EWC) so enabling the profession to set its own entry requirements.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

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

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

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

Pack Page 90
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 are aware, we have undertaken a formal consultation on proposals for draft criteria for the accreditation of initial teacher education programmes in Wales. These proposals aim to enable education professionals to take a much more central role in leading, shaping and delivering change in the profession and in creating a stable and high quality system to enable institutions and individuals to flourish.

We have now analysed all of the consultation responses received and are considering the Accreditation Criteria in light of those responses. We will publish the consultation summary report in early January 2017.

We have been considering the capacity of the education workforce to support the needs of learners with SEN. We have concluded two studies to better understand the development requirements of the general education workforce; and assess the capacity of specialist support services in supporting learners with SEN. The final reports for these two workforce studies have been published and can be accessed via the Welsh Government website at: <http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/publications/reports/an-assessment-of-special-educational-needs-workforce-development-requirements/?lang=en>; and <http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/publications/reports/workforce-planning-sen-specialist-services/?lang=en>

I introduced the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill (“ALNET”) on 12 December 2016 which will deliver a new legislative system for supporting children and young people aged 0–25 who have additional learning needs (ALN). The new system will replace the existing legislation surrounding SEN and the assessment of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in post-16 education and training.

The proposed changes to the legislative structure are just one part of a much wider Additional Learning Needs Transformation Programme (ALN-TP). The ALN-TP aims to transform expectations, experiences and outcomes for children and young people with ALN. It is about transforming the whole system to ensure that all learners with ALN are supported to overcome barriers to learning and can achieve their full potential.

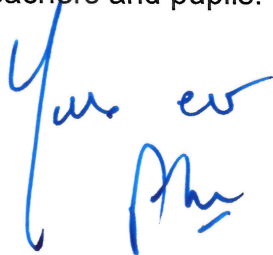
The ALN-TP consists of five interdependent themes designed to support the smooth transition and effective delivery of the new system with the aim of ensuring improved outcomes for children and young people with ALN. One of the themes is workforce development which includes a programme of skills development for education practitioners focussed at three levels; core skills development, advanced skills development for Additional Learning Needs Coordinators (ALNCos) and specialist skills development.

We are consulting with stakeholders about the ALNCO qualification, both in terms of scope and the content. We are also reviewing the support that may be provided to both teachers and support staff; in supporting learners with ALN to achieve their potential. Also, as you know Local Authorities provide specialist services, such as teachers of the deaf, who are an important part of service provision, guidance and expertise. Work is underway with the WLGA to develop a national workforce planning system for these staff, intended to inform training and recruitment.

Another theme of the ALN-TP is awareness-raising. As part of this theme the Welsh Government will be producing a range of evidence-based information about specific forms of ALN, including hearing impairments. This information will support professionals to better understand early indications of specific forms of ALN, examples of effective interventions and information on where to access further specialist advice.

The development of the awareness-raising information will include discussion with organisations with expertise in specific forms of ALN. One of the purposes of the discussions is to identify resources and advice which is currently available to practitioners, children, young people and parents.

I would welcome the input of NDCS Cymru in this area of work. My officials will be in contact with you in due course to discuss the awareness-raising materials and the ways we can encourage the use of these and other information that help raise awareness among teachers and pupils.



Alun Davies AC/AM

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

NDCS Cymru response to Ministerial comments on *Close the Gap* Petition



Petition P-04-481, February 2017

NDCS Cymru is grateful for the opportunity to comment on the Minister's response of 11.01.17 related to improving classroom acoustics and raising deaf awareness among teachers and pupils.

It is heartening that the Minister opened with a clear recognition of the need to ensure that appropriate interventions are in place for learners with hearing impairments, and closed with an invitation to NDCS Cymru to contribute to awareness raising materials – an invitation we willingly accept.

However, it's almost 4 years since we submitted our petition in May 2013, and the issues raised then are just as relevant today. So, for the 3,000 deaf children and young people in Wales we ask the Minister to do all in his power to *Close the Gap*.

Acoustics

NDCS Cymru is pleased to receive the Minister's assurance that acoustics requirements within the 21st Century Schools Programme will not be weakened. However, we understand that funding of this programme has been reduced with Local Authorities being encouraged to seek alternative sources of funding for new builds. Therefore, we call again for Welsh Government to demonstrate its commitment to good acoustics by strengthening the law so that all future schools, nursery and college buildings meet acoustic standards, regardless of how they are funded.

We would also like to repeat our offer to work with Welsh Government to raise awareness of measures to improve acoustics in existing buildings within the schools estate.

Deaf awareness

- We are very familiar with the Additional Learning Needs Transformation Programme (ALN-TP) to which the Minister refers, and welcome many aspects. Nonetheless, serious concerns prevail regarding specific provision for deaf children and young people as will be detailed in our response to the Children, Young People and Education Committee.

We're encouraged that the Minister views Teachers of the Deaf as an important part of service provision, guidance and expertise and that work is underway to develop a national workforce planning system for these staff. However, as availability, recruitment and training are significant and current issues for specialist staff (ie Teachers of the Deaf, Communication Support Workers with appropriate BSL skills, and specialist Speech and Language Therapists), we suggest that work be undertaken not only with the WLGA but also with NHS providers to encompass wider specialist staff.

- As the Minister points out, one of the themes of the ALN-TP is that of workforce skills development at the three levels of core, advanced and specialist. Given that Teachers of the Deaf will fulfil the specialist element, NDCS Cymru seeks assurance that Initial Teacher Education and the ALNCo qualification will include training on deaf awareness and deaf-specific provision. As it stands, the Minister's reference to a more rigorous approach to the accreditation of Initial Teacher Education governed by the Education Workforce Council does nothing to convince us that deaf awareness will be covered within these training programmes.
- In addition, as a key feature of the ALN-TP is the 0-25 years focus, the early years and post-16 workforce will require the same attention to skills development and forward planning, not least in terms of deaf awareness. In turn, we seek confirmation that this will be incorporated.

In support of our stance, we refer to the former Children, Young People and Education Committee's comment in its pre-legislative scrutiny of the ALNET (Wales) Bill (10.12.15):

The Committee notes the extent to which you have linked changes to ALN with other changes within education, including Initial Teacher Training (ITT) and continuing professional development (CPD) for the education workforce. It is essential that the new arrangements for ITT and CPD fully take account of

proposals for ALN and enable the education workforce to acquire and develop the skills required to deliver the new system effectively.

Conclusion

Once again, NDCS Cymru thanks the Petitions Committee for this opportunity and wishes to stress the importance it attaches to the issues raised here and in all previous correspondence. We would be happy to assist in further consideration of our petition – please contact campaigns.wales@ndcs.org.uk or call 02920 373474.

Agenda Item 3.12

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

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

Text of the Petition

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

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Caerphilly
- South Wales East

Agenda Item 3.13

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

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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-722
Ein cyf/Our ref ARD/05579/16

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

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

8

February 2017

Thank you for your letter of 21 December enclosing further correspondence from Ms Nicola Butterfield. I apologise for the delay in responding.

Core Welsh Government funding provided through the local government settlement is unhyposhated. An important principle of the settlement is that each authority decides how it spends these resources in conjunction with locally raised income to take account of local circumstances. All local councils are independent statutory authorities and are accountable to their communities for the decisions they make.

Local authority (LA) leaders and councillors are democratically elected by their communities to ensure their needs are appropriately represented and provided for. They are accountable for their actions and they have a responsibility to justify to their communities the decisions they make in respect of their financial resources and the services they provide. Pressures on budgets mean it is more important than ever that authorities engage with local people in making decisions about how local resources are raised, prioritised and spent. With encouragement from the Welsh Government, LAs are increasingly undertaking public consultation exercises about the provision of services.

Further information about expenditure on SEN provision in Wales can be found on the Welsh Government website at:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/localgov2012/120621/?lang=en>

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400
Gohebiaeth.Alun.Davies@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Alun.Davies@gov.wales

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

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

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Table 1 shows that in terms of budgeted expenditure on SEN provision, Neath Port Talbot had the largest percentage increase (8.6%) of LAs in Wales from 2015/16 to 2016/17.

Information on delegated school budgets in Wales including the notional SEN budget for each school can be found on the StatsWales Wales website at:

<http://www.statswales.wales.gov.uk/TableViewer/tableView.aspx?ReportId=5488>

In light of the latest information received from the Petitioner, I have provided some specific information on what the Welsh Government is doing with regards to autism. Each LA has been provided with £40k each year for autism as part of their annual revenue support grant with LAs having discretion on how they allocate these funds.

In November 2016 we published the refreshed Autistic Spectrum Disorder Strategic Action Plan, accompanied by a delivery plan to monitor implementation. The refreshed action plan makes a commitment to deliver a national all-age integrated autism service for Wales, backed by £6m funding. Regional Partnership Boards are responsible for the roll out of the new service which commenced in April 2016; delivery will be completed in all regions by 2019. The service creates a single point of entry across health and LAs and includes diagnostic assessment for adults and community teams to provide additional support including assistance for children with autism and their families. Roll out for Western Bay region which includes Neath Port Talbot is scheduled to commence in April 2017.

To monitor delivery of the refreshed action plan we are establishing an Implementation Advisory Group, the first meeting is planned for March and we are establishing an independent evaluation of the integrated service. We are also introducing waiting time targets of 26 weeks for both children and adults' assessment services and we will be collecting this information from March. We will produce an annual report on the delivery of the refreshed action plan each year.

The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill targets all learners who have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for additional learning provision. It does not differentiate between different types of additional learning need because it seeks to ensure that all needs are met equitably and comprehensively.



Alun Davies AC/AM

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

Mike Hedges AM
Chair
Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA (By Email)

Dear Mr. Hedges,

PETITION P-05-722 Protect Special Educational Needs

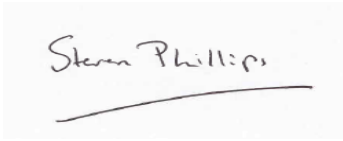
Thank you for your letter of 21 December 2016.

As regards the correspondence from Ms Nicola Butterfield (enclosed with your letter), I find it difficult to comment on the points raised because her letter cross refers to correspondence from the Minister which I have not seen. In addition, from Ms Butterfield's letter, it appears that most/all of the issues are directed towards the Welsh Government; but if she has specific issues that she wishes to raise with the Council, I can put her in touch with the relevant officers.

However, what I can say is that all schools in Neath Port Talbot follow the procedures detailed in the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice for Wales and we adopt a graduated response in terms of meeting these requirements, including Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This response starts with school level interventions, including Individual Education Plans (IEPs), for those pupils who have been identified as needing them and where a concern is specifically raised regarding ASD the Council has an agreed ten step pathway (guidance enclosed) involving both education and health professionals. Ultimately this could result in a statement of special educational needs following the completion of a statutory assessment and depending on the circumstances of the individual child, it may result in a continued placement in mainstream education or in one of our Learning Support Centres for ASD.

I hope you find this background helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven Phillips". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

Steven Phillips
Chief Executive

Guidelines for the Identification and Referral of School Placed Children and Young People In Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council with suspected Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)

An Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a developmental disorder which affects the way in which an individual is able to communicate with and relate to other people and the world around them in a meaningful way. It is very common for children and young people with ASD to have profound sensory issues combined with the triad of impairments in the areas of social interaction, social communication, rigidity of thinking and difficulties with social imagination.

These impairments are a pervasive feature of the individuals functioning in all situations, although children and young people may be affected in a variety of ways and to very different degrees and result in the children and young people experiencing the world very differently. It is now generally recognised that there is a spectrum of Autism Disorders that includes individuals across the range of severity and intellectual ability – from severely impaired to high functioning.

Over recent years, there has been a significant increase in the demand for assessments for children and young people with suspected ASD in the Neath Port Talbot area. In addition, there has been a need for a more effective, coordinated, multidisciplinary and interagency approach to the assessment process.

Guidelines for the identification, referral and assessment of children and young people with suspected Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) have already been successfully introduced into the area, with schools taking the lead role in collating the information and referring on to more specialist services for further assessment. Therefore a similar approach was used when developing this guidance.

The guidelines offer a framework for the identification, referral and assessment for school placed children and young people suspected of having an ASD and outline an ASD pathway, consisting of ten steps. The pathway is initiated by school and incorporates recommendations set out in the National Autism Plan for Children (NIASA, 2003) and the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidelines on Autism: Recognition, referral and diagnosis of children and young people on the autism spectrum.

These guidelines have been developed in consultation with a multidisciplinary group of professionals from a variety of agencies including Child and Adolescent Mental Health, Community Paediatrics, Speech and Language Therapy and Education. In developing the guidance, the group adopted the definition of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) used in the National Autism Plan for Children (NIASA 2003, P15-16):

“The term Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) will be used to mean the group of pervasive developmental disorders (PDD) characterised by qualitative abnormalities in reciprocal social interactions and in patterns of communication and by a restricted, stereotyped repetitive repertoire of interests and activities”

Acknowledgements

The following professionals have been involved in developing this guidance:

Cwm Taf Local Health Board

Dr Samantha Ames, Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist

Dr Gill Davies, Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist

Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Local Health Board

Dr Carolyn Samuel, Consultant Community Paediatrician

Dr Tamsin Josty, Consultant Community Paediatrician

Lowri Roberts, Speech and Language Therapist

Kathryn Ellis, Highly Specialist Speech and Language Therapist

Gaynor Proctor, Speech and Language Advisory Teacher

Directorate of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Services, Neath Port Talbot

Lynette Lawrence, Educational Psychologist

Debbie Riall, Advisory Teacher for Autism

Abbreviations used in document

ASD	=	Autism Spectrum Disorder
CAMHS	=	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
EP	=	Educational Psychologist
GP	=	General Practitioner
IEP	=	Individual Education Plan
LEA	=	Local Education Authority
SENCO =		Special Educational Needs Coordinator

The Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Pathway – The Ten Steps

The Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Pathway consists of a series of ten steps and provides a graduated response for the identification, referral and assessment of children and young people suspected of having ASD.

The pathway is initiated by the child and young persons class teacher. Information is gathered about the child and young person by the class teacher and Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) as they progress along the pathway. Strategies designed to help the child and young person in school will also be put in place using resources supplied by the Local Education Authority (LEA). If concerns persist, the SENCO will then consult with the Local Education Authority (LEA) Support Services for advice regarding

the necessity for further assessments and interventions. The first five steps of the pathway involve the school.

Following consultation with the LEA Support Services, if ASD is suspected, a referral is then made by the SENCO to the Communication and Support Forum for discussion with the ASD Diagnostic team. This is step six of the pathway.

Where there is sufficient evidence to suggest that further assessment for ASD is required, the ASD Diagnostic Team will invite the child or young person to opt in for further assessment at the Children's Centre or Child and Family Clinic at Neath Port Talbot Hospital. An ASD Coordinator will then be appointed. The ASD Coordinator will be responsible for coordinating further assessments by the ASD Diagnostic Team and discussing the outcome of the assessments with the parent/carer. Steps seven to ten involve the ASD Diagnostic Team.

The ASD Pathway: The Ten Steps

Step 1- Discussion with Class Teacher

- Parents/carers should be encouraged to discuss their concerns regarding possible social communication difficulties / ASD with the child's class teacher.
- If parents/carers consult their GP, Social Worker, Paediatrician or other professional regarding possible social communication difficulties/ ASD, they should still be advised to discuss their concerns with the child's class teacher.

NB: Where there is a loss of language skills in children above the age of 3 years and / or any loss of motor skills at any age, the parent/carer should be advised to seek further advice from their General Practitioner (GP) as the child or young person will require an urgent referral to a Paediatrician or Paediatric Neurologist for further assessment.

Step 2- Classroom Strategies

- The class teacher will then keep a careful note of any behaviours that cause concern and use Local Education Authority (LEA) supplied resources to devise general classroom strategies to manage such behaviours.
- These strategies will then be reviewed.

Step 3- Discussion with SENCO and Individual Education Plan (IEP) implementation

- If the class teacher continues to have concerns, they should be discussed with the SENCO and, if necessary, an IEP should be implemented. Resources provided by the LEA will support this process.

- Procedures for School Action, including reviewing the IEP's, would then be implemented in close liaison with parents/carers.

Step 4- Consultation with Local Education Authority (LEA) Support Services / IEP review

- Where concerns persist, following reviews of IEP's at School Action, the SENCO may consult with the LEA Support Services.
- The LEA Support Services include the school's Educational Psychologist (EP), Advisory Teacher for Autism, Behavioural Support Team and the Speech and Language Advisory Teacher.
- The LEA Support Service Staff can discuss the concerns with the SENCO and give advice on the necessity for further assessments and interventions to implement a more detailed IEP.
- Procedures for School Action Plus, including reviewing the IEP's, would be implemented in close liaison with parents/carers and LEA Support Service Staff.

Step 5- Detailed Information Gathering

- Where there are ongoing concerns regarding possible ASD, more detailed information will be gathered by the class teacher and SENCO. This information should include;
 - i. Copies of child or young persons IEP and reviewed IEP's.
 - ii. Reports from the LEA Support Services that have been involved e.g. EP, Advisory Teacher for Autism, Behavioural Support Team and Speech and Language Advisory Teacher.
 - iii. Completion of Social and Communication Disorders Checklist by parent.
 - iv. Completion of Neath Port Talbot Social Communication Questionnaire by school.
 - v. Completion of Children's Communication Checklist (CCC2) by parent and school.
 - vi. Any other relevant information.

The checklists and questionnaires can be obtained via the Communication and Support Forum.

Step 6- Referral to the Communication and Support Forum

- Once this information has been collated, the SENCO will submit this information with the Consultation Referral Form to the Communication and Support Forum.
- The Consultation Referral Form includes a box labelled the "Autism Diagnostic Team" which should be completed.

Step 7- Discussion at the Communication and Support Forum with the ASD Diagnostic Team

- The information provided by the SENCO will then be discussed at the Communication and Support Forum with members of the ASD Diagnostic Team.
- The ASD Diagnostic Team is multidisciplinary group of professionals who have a key role in the assessment of children and young people with suspected ASD and includes professionals from the following agencies:

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
 Community Paediatrics
 Speech and Language Therapy
 Education (Educational Psychology, Advisory Teacher for Autism)

- Where there is insufficient evidence to suggest that further assessment for ASD is required, the SENCO will be contacted by a member of the Communication and Support Forum and further advice given. The SENCO will share this information with the parent / carer.

Step 8- Appointment of ASD Coordinator

- Where there is sufficient evidence to suggest that further assessment for ASD is required, the SENCO will be contacted by a member of the Communication and Support Forum. The SENCO will share this information with the parent / carer.
- The child or young person will be invited to “opt in” for further assessment at the Children’s Centre or Child and Family Clinic at Neath Port Talbot Hospital.
- An ASD Coordinator will be appointed. The ASD coordinator may be any member of the ASD Diagnostic team but is likely to be a member of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) Team if the child is in Year 1 and above or a member of the Community Paediatric Team if the child is in nursery or reception.
- The ASD coordinator will identify and coordinate further assessments by the ASD Diagnostic Team.

Step 9- ASD Diagnostic Team Meeting

- Once the assessments have been completed, the ASD coordinator and members of the ASD Diagnostic Team will meet to discuss the assessments, review all the available information and make a decision regarding a diagnosis of ASD.

Step 10- ASD Coordinator Feedback

- The ASD coordinator will then meet with the parents / carers to discuss the outcome of the assessments and agree a management plan for the child and young person.

- With parental consent, written confirmation of the outcome of the assessment and management plan will be sent to the referrer (SENCO) with copies to other relevant professionals.

Referrals for children and young people suspected of having ASD but not placed in school.

This pathway only applies to children and young people who are in school. However there are some children and young people who are educated outside of school who may also present with difficulties suggestive of ASD.

For those children and young people who are educated outside of school by the LEA, the pathway can still be followed with the involvement of the LEA Support Services and information gathered by the tutors.

For those children and young people who are educated at home by a parent, a referral will need to be made by the GP to the relevant ASD Diagnostic Team. The referral will then be discussed at the Communication and Support Forum. If there is sufficient evidence, further assessments will be undertaken by the ASD Diagnostic Team.

Where there are significant and persistent concerns raised by a parent / carer but the child or young person does not present with similar concerns at school, further advice can be sought from the Advisory Teacher for Autism.

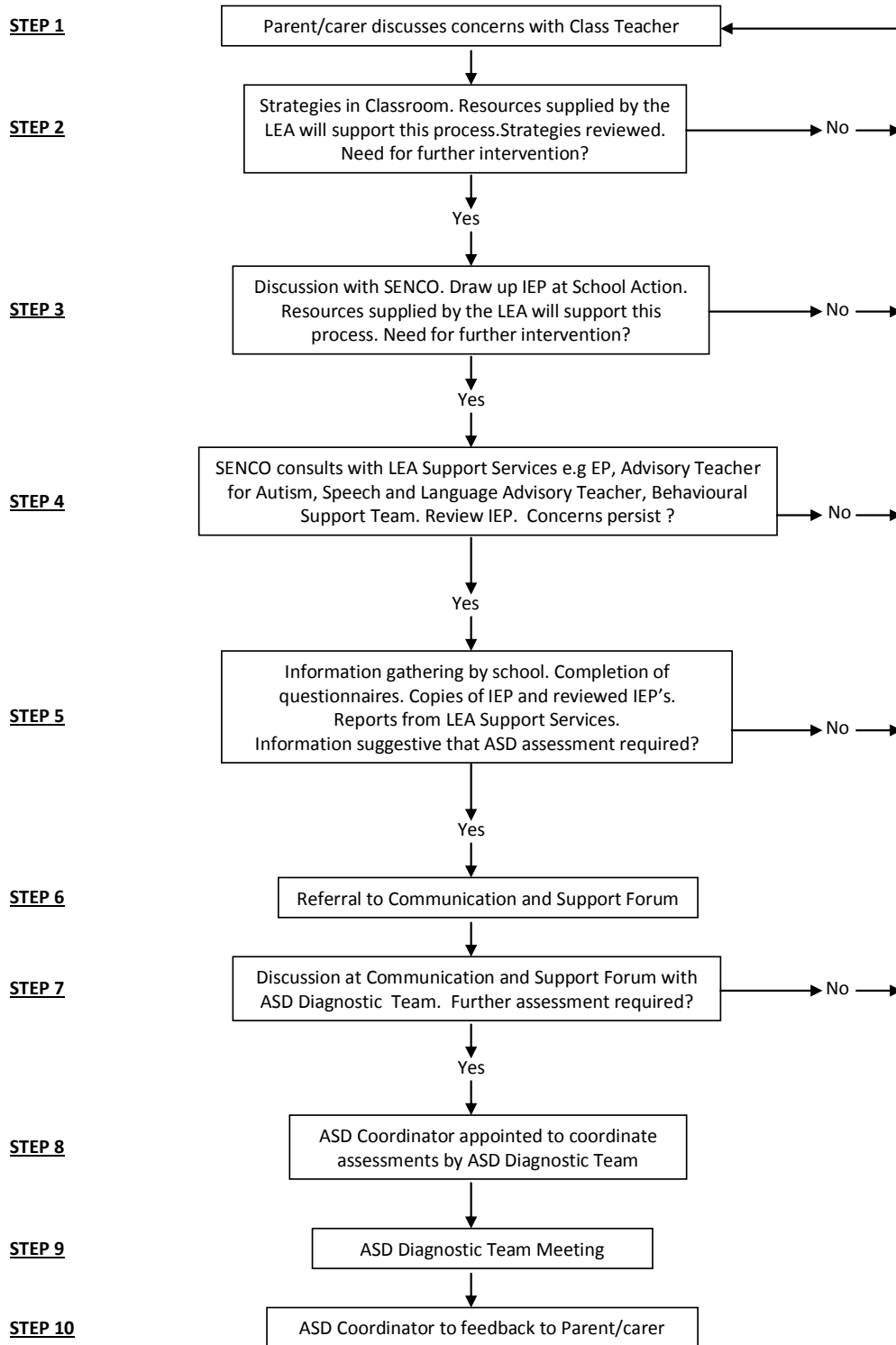
Where there are concerns about younger children, under the age of 3 years and not yet in nursery, referrals can be made directly to the ASD Diagnostic Team (Community Paediatrics) by the Health Visitor or GP.

For those young people aged 16 years and above but no longer in education, referrals can be made directly to the ASD Diagnostic Team (CAMHS).

References

1. National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) 2011. Autism: Recognition, referral and diagnosis of children and young people on the autism spectrum.
2. The National Autism Plan for Children (NIASA, 2003).

**PATHWAY FOR THE IDENTIFICATION AND REFERRAL FOR SCHOOL PLACED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
WITH SUSPECTED AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER – THE TEN STEP PATHWAY**



P-04-439 : Ancient veteran and heritage trees of Wales to be given greater protection

Petition wording:

We believe that the ancient, veteran and heritage trees of Wales are a vital and irreplaceable part of the nation's environment and heritage.

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to provide greater protection for them, for example by:

- Placing a duty on the new Single Environmental Body to promote the conservation of such trees by providing advice and support for their owners, including the grant aid where necessary;
- Amending current Tree Preservation Order legislation to make it fully fit for purpose in protecting ancient, veteran and heritage trees, in line with proposals by Coed Cadw (the Woodland Trust);
- Incorporating the database of trees recorded and verified through the Ancient Tree Hunt project as a dataset in any successor to the Wales Spatial Plan, recognising these as 'Trees of Special Interest' and providing this information to Local Planning Authorities in Wales so that it can be incorporated into their GIS system, for information.

Petition raised by: Coed Cadw Cymru

Date petition first considered by Committee: 4 December 2012

Number of signatures: 5,320

P-04-439 Ancient veteran and heritage trees of Wales to be given greater protection – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Clerking team, 23.02.17

Hi Kayleigh

The latest on this is that the Welsh Government established a Task and Finish Group to look at this issue. I know this as I am a member. The group has met twice and draft recommendations have been produced by the Civil Servant Chris James. As nothing had happened for some months, I wrote to the Minister Lesley Griffiths at the end of last year to ask if anything was happening on this. I received quite a positive reply. In response to this, I wrote this blog on the subject, which explains this in more detail:

<http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blogs/woodland-trust/2016/12/good-news-for-the-gnarled-and-wrinkly/>

You are very welcome to use any quotes from the blog.

Many thanks

Rory

Rory Francis

Rheolwr Cyfathrebu ac Ymgysylltu / Communications and Engagement Manager

P-04-681 Allow Public Recording of Local Government Meetings

In Wales

This petition was submitted by Michael John Powell, having collected 186 signatures.

Text of the Petition

We the undersigned ask that the Welsh Government gives the people and electors of Wales the same ability to record their Local Government meetings as their English counterparts have.

Additional Information:

The detailed provisions are contained in the secondary legislation made under the 2000 Act, that is the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012. The regulations were enacted in September 2012 and announced on the Department for Communities and Local Government website.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Pontypridd
- South Wales Central

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-04-681
Ein cyf/Our ref MD/00078/17

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

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

17 February 2017

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your letter of 1 February regarding the public recording of local government meetings.

The White Paper, 'Reforming Local Government: Resilient and Renewed' currently the subject of consultation, proposes to retain the provisions from the Draft Local Government (Wales) Bill which require Local Authorities to produce strategies explaining how the public can understand how decisions are made and how they can participate in the process. Further to this, I intend to make broadcasting of Council meetings a statutory requirement. Councils will also be required to allow members to attend meetings remotely.

The Welsh Government previously provided financial support to encourage local authorities to broadcast their meetings, to enable remote attendance at council meetings and to enable community councils to set up websites.

In March 2013, the then Local Government Minister, Carl Sargeant announced 1.25 million pounds of grant funding for this purpose, 21 local authorities took advantage of the funding that was made available to them, Neath Port Talbot were the only local authority not to do so. The funding was predominantly spent on hiring Public-i to facilitate the broadcasting of meetings.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400
Gohebiaeth.Mark.Drakeford@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Mark.Drakeford@gov.wales

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

Pack Page 112

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 encourage all local authorities to allow access to their proceedings and I am pleased to see that this is now regular practice in many local authorities.

Best wishes,

Mark

Mark Drakeford AM/AC

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

Agenda Item 3.16

P-05-730 Local Government Finance and Funding.

This petition was submitted by UNISON Wales, which collected 2,192 signatures.

Text of the Petition

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

- a. To increase aggregate external financing (revenue) to local authorities to at least the levels that applied in 2013/14 in real terms
- b. Introduce legislation that provides a 'power of general competence' for local authorities in Wales
- c. Encourage local authorities to use their existing powers to provide goods and services to other parts of the public sector in Wales, and to explore and to trade by developing the range of goods and services that can be supplied to members of the public in general and to the private sector more generally
- d. Work with local authorities in Wales to release existing revenue streams through, for example refinancing or replacing PFI schemes on more favourable terms utilising the opportunities afforded by historically low interest rates
- e. Undertake, to support the work of the Independent Commission on Local Government Finance Wales.

We the undersigned value the services provided by local councils in Wales and believe that by implementing these measures the Welsh Government will help to prevent further damage to local public service provision; whilst recognising that these measures are only part of the solution and an end to the Westminster Government austerity programme will be necessary to ensure that public services could be sustainably and adequately funded into the future.

Additional information

UNISON Wales is the largest public sector trade union organising around 100,000 public sector workers in Wales.

UNISON Wales, in addition to campaigning for an end to austerity and for Fair Funding for Wales from the Westminster Government, is also campaigning for the Wales Government to protect Local Government spending and take the necessary

measures to ensure that our council services, which ensure healthy and educated communities, are protected.

Assembly constituency and Region

- Cardiff Central
- South Wales Central



Eich cyf/Your ref: P-05-730
Ein cyf/Our ref: MD/00079/17

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

SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales

17 February 2017

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your letter of 1 February regarding petition P-05-730 on local government finance and funding.

Since you first wrote on this matter and my reply of 22 November, I have published the final settlement for local government in Wales for 2017-18. This reflects an increase of £6 million compared with the provisional settlement. It also preserves the funding floor, welcomed by UNISON Cymru/Wales in its submission to the Petitions Committee, to ensure that no authority sees a reduction of more than 0.5% compared with 2016-17.

The Welsh Government published a White Paper, *Reforming Local Government: Resilient and Renewed*, on 31 January. This sets out our proposals for the reform of local government in Wales.

The proposals are out for consultation until 11 April and I would welcome a response from UNISON Cymru/Wales and other interested parties.

The consultation can be accessed at the following link:

<https://consultations.gov.wales/consultations/reforming-local-government-resilient-and-renewed>.

In developing these proposals, I engaged extensively with local government and key stakeholders over the summer and autumn months. In taking the proposals forward, I intend to engage widely with experts in a range of fields and to work with local government and stakeholders through our established consultative arrangements.

Best wishes,

Mark,

Mark Drakeford AM/AC

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