

## **P-04-502 Wellbeing Centre for Wales**

### **Petition wording:**

We the undersigned call on the Welsh Assembly to urge the Welsh Government to establish a new Wellbeing Centre for Wales that would put individual and community wellbeing(1) at the heart of Welsh politics, and that would be core-funded by government.

### **Additional information:**

Although we recognize that the Welsh government has made considerable strides forward in terms of wellbeing policy, the latest statistics from the All-Wales Mental Health Network show that poor mental health, for example, costs the Welsh economy £7.2bn a year(2) and that the industrial areas of south east Wales have amongst the lowest subjective wellbeing scores in the UK(3)

We believe that this situation needs a solution.

A Wellbeing Centre for Wales would provide evidence-based policy solutions to the problem of wellbeing levels in Wales that are, on average, lower than the UK average. It would draw on the expertise of a wide range of cross-sector partners; including those with policy-making expertise and a track record in effective political engagement; those with experience of delivering wellbeing initiatives at grassroots levels, such as representatives from the voluntary sector; those with a background in action research; as well as academics and academic networks.

A Wellbeing Centre for Wales would draw inspiration from prestigious policy institutes like the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ). As with the CSJ's Poverty Fighting Alliance, The Centre would also aim to build on the vibrant network of grassroots charities and voluntary organizations already established by Lles Cymru Wellbeing Wales, to create a dynamic Wellbeing Network that would serve not only to showcase models of best practice that would then

inform and shape policy solutions, but also act as a bridge between communities and government.

The Wellbeing Centre for Wales could also provide a focus for a whole range of innovative wellbeing-promoting initiatives, such as working with the public and private sector to provide programmes of workplace training around wellbeing issues, including targeted workplace wellbeing training for those on low incomes; scaling up resources like the Sustainable Wellbeing Toolkit, which was developed by Lles Cymru Wellbeing Wales to help organizations implement and measure wellbeing programmes; mapping out community assets in Wales for the benefit of the public; or creating digital resources to increase public awareness around wellbeing issues, such as creating free electronic apps to measure individual wellbeing. The Centre would look for funding for its programme of projects and events from charitable trusts and foundations, as well as corporate sponsors, private individuals, and partnerships with the private sector.

In short, we the undersigned believe that a concerted effort is now required by multiple agencies, all working together, to realize the wellbeing ambitions set out in the government's legislative programme. A Wellbeing Centre for Wales would be a perfect vehicle to drive change.

[1] "Wellbeing is a positive physical, social and mental state; it is not just the absence of pain, discomfort and incapacity. It arises not only from the action of individuals but from a host of collective goods and relationships with other people. It requires that basic needs are met, that individuals have a sense of purpose, and that they feel able to achieve important goals and participate in society. It is enhanced by conditions that include supportive personal relationships, involvement in empowered communities, good health, financial security, rewarding employment, and a healthy and attractive environment.

From 'Local Wellbeing: Can We Measure it?' New Economics Foundation, September 2008

(2) Promoting mental health and preventing mental illness: the economic case for investment in Wales by Lynne Friedli and Michael Parsonage October 2009. For more details visit:

<http://www.publicmentalhealth.org/news.cfm?orgid=749&contentid=15934>

[3] <http://www.wiserd.ac.uk/training-events/annual-conference/programme/health-and-wellbeing/analysis-subjective-wellbeing-wales-evidence-annual-populati/>

**Petition raised by:** Wellbeing Wales

**Date petition first considered by Committee:** 24 September 2013

**Number of signatures:** 52