

Agenda – Petitions Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 5 – Tŷ Hywel

Meeting date: 7 March 2022

Meeting time: 14.00

For further information contact:

Gareth Price – Committee Clerk

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- 1 **Introduction, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest**
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- 2 **Evidence Session – P-06-1207 Start referring to Welsh cities and towns by their Welsh names**

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- 5 Paper to Note – Letter & report from Children, Young People and Education Committee regarding engagement with children and young people about the Committee's 6 the Senedd priorities**
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Improve health service for people with epilepsy living in Wales

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | Mawrth 2021
Petitions Committee | March 2021

Reference: SR221851-2

Petition Number: P-06-1240

Petition Title: Improve health services for people with epilepsy living in Wales.

Text of petition: We are concerned that the current services for people with epilepsy living in Wales are not providing people with the help and support they need. Epilepsy Action recommends a caseload of no more than 250 people per Epilepsy Specialist Nurse (ESN), in order to minimise the effects of their condition and provide the best possible care. Currently no area in Wales is meeting this recommendation. There is a lack of ESNs and waiting times to see neurologists are over 12 months in many areas.



1. Background

Almost **1 in 100 people** in the UK have epilepsy. In Wales, **approximately 32,000 people** have epilepsy.

Epilepsy is a **neurological condition** that affects the brain and causes seizures or unusual sensations and behaviours. Epilepsy can start at any age and there are many different types. Some children will outgrow the condition as they age. But for many people epilepsy is a life-long condition. Further details are available on [the Epilepsy Action Cymru website](#).

Treatment can control epileptic episodes. Epilepsy medicines can't cure epilepsy but Anti-Epileptic Drugs (AEDs) **can help to stop or reduce the number of seizures**. Other types of treatment include brain surgery, or a special diet (the ketogenic diet) can sometimes be used for children.

Epilepsy Specialist Nurses (ESNs) play a significant role in the care of people with neurological disorders such as epilepsy.

The previous Welsh Government published a [Neurological Conditions Delivery Plan](#) in 2017. A Neurological Conditions Implementation Group was set up to oversee the delivery plan and to support Health Boards and partners to deliver their local plans.

The Neurological Conditions Implementation Group, which covers conditions including multiple sclerosis, motor neurone disease, epilepsy, Parkinson's disease, muscular dystrophy and Acquired Brain Injury sits within the **NHS Wales Health Collaborative** (a national organisation working on behalf of the health bodies that make up NHS Wales).

The Welsh Government hasn't updated the Neurological Conditions Delivery Plan. Instead, [the Welsh Government's National Clinical Framework \(NCF\)](#) published in March 2021, describes how clinical services (such as neurological conditions) will be supported by a range of **quality statements** that set out high-level policy intentions and describe the standards and outcomes expected of clinical services. A quality statement on neurological conditions hasn't yet been published.

2. Welsh Government action

In her response to the Chair of the Petitions Committee, the Minister for Health and Social Services, Eluned Morgan MS says the Welsh Government is “continuing to work with the **Neurological Conditions Implementation Group (NCIG)** to improve services for all those with neurological conditions across Wales, including epilepsy”. The Minister sets out a number of priorities the NCIG is currently working on including:

- Developing a **data dashboard for epilepsy**; to support business cases for developing services and support for people with epilepsy going forward.
- Developing a **quality statement for neurological conditions**; setting out expectations of how people with neurological conditions can be better supported.
- **Liaising with the UK Department of Health and Social Care**; to ensure the UK Government’s strategy on neurological conditions takes into account that health services are devolved in Wales.

The Minister makes clear that **Health Boards and Trusts remain responsible for planning and delivering services** for those with neurological conditions including epilepsy.

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



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1240
Ein cyf/Our ref EM/14732/21

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions committee

31 January 2022

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your e-mail of 13 December, regarding Petition P-06-1240, Improving health services for people with epilepsy living in Wales, submitted by Janet Paterson. I apologise for the delay in my response.

The Welsh Government is continuing to work with the Neurological Conditions Implementation Group (NCIG) to improve services for all those with neurological conditions across Wales, including epilepsy.

The NCIG provides national leadership and drives forward change to deliver better quality, higher value, more consistent and accessible services for people affected by neurological conditions, taking into consideration the challenges and opportunities raised by the Covid-19 pandemic. Their aim is to continue to raise awareness of neurological conditions, and to ensure those affected by any kind of neurological condition have timely access to high quality pathways of care from symptom onset to end of life.

In addition, the NCIG is currently working with the Value Based Health Care team to develop a data dashboard for epilepsy which will help to support business cases for developing services and support for people with epilepsy going forward. Discussions around including epilepsy on the national dashboard as a way of monitoring services and identifying inequalities are underway, and the group recognises the importance of quality data for service improvements and the challenges faced to date in this area.

Our National Clinical Framework (NCF) published in March 2021, describes how clinical services, such as neurological conditions, should be provided over the next decade and how we can better support system planning and quality improvement. The NCF will be supported by a range of quality statements that set out high-level policy intentions and describe the standards and outcomes expected of clinical services. The NCIG is currently working on a specific quality statement for neurological conditions.

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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.

We are also aware of UK Government plans to publish a cross government strategy on neurological conditions and are liaising with the Department of Health and Social Care to ensure that any such strategy takes into account that health services are devolved in Wales, as well as consideration of our national clinical framework and developing quality statements.

Health boards and trusts remain responsible for planning and delivering services for those with neurological conditions including epilepsy. They undertake population needs analysis to help establish required levels of staffing, including Epilepsy Specialist Nurses. I expect them to put in place services tailored to the individual needs of patients. They work closely with voluntary organisations and people with a lived experience of a neurological condition, to continually improve services.

I expect to see transformation to deliver increased and more consistent provision of rehabilitation, reablement and recovery services, including neuro-rehabilitation to ensure people can maximise their recovery from ill-health as close to home as possible and live healthier, happier, longer, independent lives.

I hope this information is helpful in addressing some of the issues raised by the Petition.

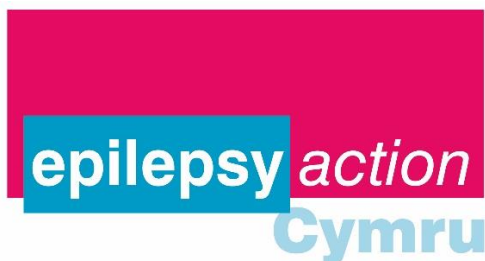
Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. E. Morgan'.

Eluned Morgan AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services

P-06-1240 Improve health services for people with epilepsy living in Wales –
Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 18 February 2022



The response from Eluned Morgan, Minister for Health and Social Services, does not adequately address the concerns raised by the petition, or indeed wider concerns about the lack of epilepsy services across Wales and the urgent need to ensure that each Health board and trust has a properly funded, staffed and resourced epilepsy service.

While we welcome information around the work of the Neurological Conditions Implementation Group (NCIG) and the National Clinical Framework, neither of these represent the real and immediate need for improvements to epilepsy services in Wales, where many people are currently facing waits of 12 months or more to see a neurologist.

As highlighted by the petition, a cost-effective and quick way to address the issues around epilepsy services in Wales is to significantly improve the number of ESNs.

Epilepsy is a complex, long-term condition and because of this at least 60% of people with epilepsy will require ongoing access to an ESN. The NICE guidelines recommend that all patients with epilepsy have access to an ESN. The role of the ESN involves managing and adjusting medication, education of people with epilepsy, promoting self-management, education of carers and family, interception of emergency admissions and urgent clinic appointments through telephone calls. One study has shown that the appointment of a new ESN reduced A&E attendances for people with epilepsy by 50%.

Around 52% of those with the condition will go on to become seizure free with currently available treatments – but this number could be higher with better care and treatment. Those whose seizures cannot be controlled with existing treatments continue to face additional risks due to their epilepsy. Each year epilepsy is linked to over 100,000 unplanned hospital admissions and 1000 early deaths in the UK. As many as 40% of these deaths could be prevented.

The Minister's reply makes no reference to any government plans to address the lack of ESNs, or to reduce the caseload of current ESNs. NICE guidelines state that all patients with epilepsy should have access to an epilepsy specialist nurse. We have listed the number of adult and paediatric epilepsy specialist nurses in each Health Board below:

- Aneurin Bevan University Health Board – 1 full time and 2 part time adult ESNs (however, one of the part time nurses is leaving soon), 4 part time paediatric ESNs
- Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board – 1 adult ESN and 3 paediatric ESNs

- Cardiff & Vale University Health Board – 3 WTE adult ESNs and 1 WTE paediatric ESN
- Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board – 0 adult ESNs, 2 paediatric ESNs
- Hywel Dda University Health Board – 1 full time and 1 part time adult ESNs, 1 paediatric ESN
- Powys Teaching Health Board – 0 ESNs
- Swansea Bay University Health Board – 2 adult ESNs and 2 paediatric ESNs

The petition also highlighted that Epilepsy Action recommends a caseload of no more than 250 people per Epilepsy Specialist Nurse (ESN), to minimise the effects of their condition and provide the best possible care. In addition, Welsh government's own Steers report in 2008 recommended a ratio of 300:1 and recommendations from the Royal College of Physicians and the Association of British Neurologists suggested a minimum of 9 ENS per 500,000 population, a ratio of 550:1. Based on the ESN figures above, and the number of people in Wales who have epilepsy, the current caseload in Wales is 2195 patients per adult ESN. It is therefore clear that the target caseload is not being met. Implementing the Steers report recommendations would mean that Wales should have **70** ENS and urgent action is needed to address this service gap.

[The ESPENTE report](#) shows the long-term savings through having an adequate number of ESNs, in addition to saving physician's time. For example, the report highlighted the role of two specialist epilepsy nurses at University Hospital Cardiff, where patients suspected of having an epileptic seizure are seen by one of two specialist epilepsy nurses within 4 hours of arriving at the accident and emergency department. Patients received a review before being referred to an enhanced first seizure clinic. It is a system that has already saved £45,000 in its first year. A US-based study undertook a cost effectiveness analysis of a shared assessment clinic with a physician working alongside a nurse specialist. The evaluation found that physician time was reduced by 66% and the cost of a clinic visit was reduced by 39% by using the expert nurses.

One [study](#) showed that 70% of patients with epilepsy attending clinics run by ESNs had previously unidentified problems successfully resolved by the nurse including misdiagnosis, overmedication and lack of awareness of drug adverse effects.

The epilepsy health professionals that we have spoken to are all open to recruiting nurses with generic skills and upskilling them to specialist nurse level and beyond, where those with particular skill set are not yet available. They are keen for this to happen sooner rather than later. We recognise that the final report of the Review of

Neurology Services is yet to be published with workforce included in its remit, but we feel that urgent action is needed to improve the care of people with epilepsy and reduce pressures on both the specialist epilepsy workforce and neurology waiting lists.

This [study](#) highlights the valuable role that an Open Access Model run by ESNs can play in optimising the care of people with epilepsy – “These interventions by the ESN prevented 268 clinic appointments over 3 months. At a cost of £130 per clinic appointment, this extrapolates to a potential saving of £34,840 in three months, or £139,360 annually.”

In addition to concerns around a lack of ESNs across Wales, there are further concerns about the need for more consultant neurologists in addition to increased funding for services across all health boards in the country. While addressing these issues remains important, it will take longer to do, and so increasing the number of ESNs across all health boards in Wales would be a way to start addressing these issues in the short-medium term.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "J. Paterson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Jan Paterson
Wales Manager for Epilepsy Action Cymru

We call on the Welsh Government to lead the way by supporting trials of a four-day week in Wales

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 7 Mawrth 2022
Petitions Committee | 7 March 2022

Reference: SR22/1904-1

Petition Number: P-06-1247

Petition title: We call on the Welsh Government to lead the way by supporting trials of a four-day week in Wales

Text of petition:

Moving to a four-day working week boosts productivity & workers' wellbeing. After successful trials of a shorter working week in Iceland - with no reduction in pay - governments in Scotland, Ireland & Spain are all devising their own four-day week pilots that are scheduled to begin next year. There's also serious moves towards a four-day week taking place in Belgium, New Zealand, Germany & Japan.

We call on the Welsh Government to lead the way by supporting trials of a four-day week in Wales.

1. Background

The five-day standard working week has been the norm in the UK since the first half of the last century. However, there have recently been calls for this to be reduced. A shorter working week is defined by the Future Generations



Commissioner and Autonomy as “a reduction of weekly hours spent working, with no associated loss in pay”. Its implementation has often been proposed by campaigners as a ‘four-day week’, which reduces weekly working hours to around 32 hours per week.

Arguments have been advanced both for and against a move to a four-day week, with campaigners suggesting that a four-day week would have benefits for workers, employers, the economy, society and the environment. However, potential concerns have been raised around implementation costs, challenges specific industries would face in moving to a four-day week, and whether predicted productivity gains would materialise.

2. Welsh Government position

The Minister for Economy wrote to the Committee on 28 January, stating that the Welsh Government recognises “potential benefits in a shorter working week and we are keen to see the outcome of pilots planned for Scotland and Ireland in particular”. He went on to state that:

We want to consider the delivery, impact and outcomes of these pilots. We will want to see consistent evidence from these pilots of how a four-day working week can improve work-life balance, help us cut carbon emissions and support gender equality, whilst avoiding unintended consequences.

On 19 January, the Minister for Economy answered questions from Luke Fletcher and Jack Sargeant in Plenary, and provided further details of the Welsh Government’s position on supporting a four-day week trial. He stated that:

...we are interested in what is happening. We have nothing to lose from reviewing the evidence in other parts of the world and seeing how comparable it is. We always have challenges about how we prioritise Government resources that are limited, and are undertaking trials that are meaningful and worth while, and can tell us something about what may be able to apply in the future, and how widely spread that opportunity may be as well.

The Minister went on to note that if Welsh businesses want to trial a four-day week, the Welsh Government would be interested in speaking to them to learn more about how that fits into the Welsh Government’s current work, what support

it could potentially provide, and how it could take on board any learning from the trial.

3. Welsh Parliament consideration

On 22 September 2021, the Senedd held a debate on a four-day working week. The following amended motion was passed:

To propose that the Senedd:

1. Recognises the change in work practices as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and that this has brought with it many wellbeing and work-life balance benefits.
2. Believes that reforming working practices to meet the challenges of the automation revolution is necessary.
3. Notes with interest that governments in Scotland, Spain and Ireland are planning national-level pilots for a four-day working week.
4. Recognises pilots of a four-day working week in Iceland were an overwhelming success and led to many workers moving to shorter hours with no reduction in pay.
5. Calls on the Welsh Government to consider the progress that is made through pilots in other countries and examine the lessons Wales can learn.

4. Future Generations Commissioner/Autonomy report

On 14 February, the Future Generations Commissioner and Autonomy published a report on a shorter working week. This sets out a number of **arguments in support of introducing a shorter working week**:

- To redistribute work in a fairer way, by addressing overwork and underemployment and reducing precarious work.
- To address inequalities in caring responsibilities.
- To support community cohesion by giving workers more free time to contribute to their communities.

-
- Improving health by decreasing stress levels and improving other indicators.
 - Reducing carbon emissions through less commuting.
 - Helping Wales adapt to labour-market changes caused by automation.

A survey undertaken as part of their work shows that 62% of respondents would ideally like to work four days a week or less, and that 57% support the Welsh Government piloting a scheme to move towards a four-day week.

It also outlined **potential barriers to the Welsh Government supporting the move to a four-day week**. Employment and industrial relations are reserved under the current devolution settlement (with the exception of matters relating to the *Agriculture Sector (Wales) Act 2014*), as are working time regulations. Additionally, subsidising widespread adoption of a four-day week would impact considerably on the Welsh Government's budget, with the report stating that "immediate, wide-scale implementation would require a government subsidy scheme to cover the costs to those employers who would require new staff to mitigate any negative effects on output of fewer labour hours".

Appendix A of the report addresses some of the 'common objections to a shorter working week'.

The report calls for the Welsh Government to take a number of steps to support a shorter working week within these constraints:

- Trialling a shorter working week within the public sector, either as a large-scale trial or a gradual roll-out.
- Using public sector procurement to encourage adoption of a four-day week/shorter working week in the private sector.
- Introducing a scheme where private sector employers can be accredited for reducing staff working hours.
- Collaborate with and empower trade unions to negotiate shorter working hours.

5. Developments beyond Wales

Perhaps the most well-known adoption of a shorter working week (not necessarily a four-day week) has been in Iceland. Iceland has traditionally had long working hours and relatively poor work-life balance, which has been argued to cause relatively low productivity. Initially the Icelandic Government (between 2015 and 2019) and Reykjavik City Council (between 2017 and 2021) undertook separate

trials where workers moved from a 40 hour week to a 35-36 hour one for the same pay. Two organisations that advocate a shorter working week, the UK think-tank Autonomy and the Icelandic organisation Alda, have published a report setting out the key findings from the trials. They found that reduced working hours improved workers' well-being and work-life balance, and maintained or increased productivity and service provision. Since the trials took place, 86% of Icelandic workers are either employed on contracts with shorter working hours, or on contracts that give them the right to work shorter hours. While those working standard hours saw relatively small reductions in hours, shift workers in the public sector such as nurses saw a larger reduction in the number of hours they are expected to work.

There are other examples of governments funding pilots to trial shorter working weeks. The **Scottish Government** is currently designing a pilot to help businesses explore the introduction of a four-day week, and has committed in its Programme for Government to establishing a £10 million fund to do this. The **Spanish Government is establishing** a voluntary pilot which will provide businesses with subsidies to introduce a four-day working week without pay reductions for staff.

Non-governmental organisations have also established pilots to trial a four day week, with 4 Day Week Global currently setting up a number of pilots across different countries. At the time of writing this briefing, Four Day Week Ireland is scheduled to operate a pilot four-day week programme in Ireland for 6 months from February 2022. This is being run by organisations who support a four-day week, and the pilot will provide support for participating employers; training; coaching and mentoring; and access to academic research and experts. **As part of the pilot, the Irish Government is funding a call for research on the economic, social and environmental impacts of a four-day week,** and will consider the impacts on employers taking part in the pilot. **A similar pilot will operate in the UK for six months from June 2022,** run by Four Day Week Global in conjunction with academic researchers, the 4 Day Week UK campaign and the think-tank Autonomy.

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

Vaughan Gething AS/MS
Gweinidog yr Economi
Minister for Economy

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1247
Ein cyf/Our ref VG/00068/22

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions committee



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

28 January 2022

Dear Jack

I am writing in response to your letter on 12 November, seeking the Welsh Government's views on the adoption of a four-day working week in Wales.

I recognise potential benefits in a shorter working week and we are keen to see the outcome of pilots planned for Scotland and Ireland in particular. There has been some encouraging employer interest in the Irish pilot, but it will not begin until early 2022. The precise details of the Scottish pilot is not yet finalised. Our officials are in close contact with their counterparts in the Scottish Government and are discussing the experience of developing a pilot in a devolved context.

We want to consider the delivery, impact and outcomes of these pilots. We will want to see consistent evidence from these pilots of how a four-day working week can improve work-life balance, help us cut carbon emissions and support gender equality, whilst avoiding unintended consequences.

As referenced in First Ministers' Questions recently, some businesses in Wales have already expressed an interest in a four-day week as they believe it makes commercial sense to do so. We would support their policy intent should they decide to implement such an arrangement.

More broadly, a four-day working week is just one example of flexible working and through our social partnership approach, we are keen to encourage more employers to look innovatively at job design to enable workers to exercise more choice over where, when and how they work.

Yours sincerely,

Vaughan Gething AS/MS
Gweinidog yr Economi
Minister for Economy

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

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

P-06-1247 We call on the Welsh Government to lead the way by supporting trials of a four-day week in Wales, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 01.03.22

Thanks for the opportunity to respond, and for extending the deadline.

In brief, given the pressing need to make bold and radical changes in order to reach our Net Zero ambitions by 2050, we cannot wait for others to act before acting ourselves. A four day week, in its simplest form, would reduce the commuting requirements for many by 20%. The Co-operation Agreement has proposed to develop the Net Zero ambitions further (by 2035) and as such a four day week trial has to be considered as a part of the policy mix.

Further, the pandemic has shown us that employee well-being is multi-faceted, and reducing hours spent at work is a key way to improve well-being at work and at home. As with other areas of policy, it is imperative we use the post pandemic recovery to seek to learn the positive lessons that are discernible from the last two years, in order to build a fairer, happier and more productive Wales.

Whilst noting the Minister's letter carefully, I would conclude that my call for Welsh Government to consider its own independent trial of a four day working week remains valid, and I would ask that the Petitions Committee support such a call, perhaps with a short study to augment the recently published excellent work undertaken by Autonomy, on behalf of the Office of the Future Generations' Commissioner.

Cofion

Secure the Right to Remote Access for Disabled and Neurodivergent People

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 7 Mawrth 2022
Petitions Committee | 7 March 2022

Reference: SR22/2201/6

Petition Number: P-06-1251

Petition title: Secure the Right to Remote Access for Disabled and Neurodivergent People.

Text of petition: I am a student with fibromyalgia and C-PTSD. Having the ability to access my course remotely greatly benefitted both my physical and mental health. Other disabled and neurodivergent people have had similar experiences and would like the option to continue accessing their courses in this manner.

The Senedd should ensure the right to remote access to education, and further should enshrine in law the responsibility of educational institutions to dedicate complete commitment to creating an accessible, inclusive environment. Refusal of this robs disabled and neurodivergent people of the life and liberty we deserve.



1. Background

1.1. Decisions about higher education provision

Welsh universities are primarily autonomous institutions with considerable independence and control over their education provision. Each university has a 'governing body' which is intended to be 'collectively responsible and accountable for all institutional activities and which approves all final decisions on matters of fundamental concern within its remit'.

However the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales ([HEFCW](#)) is the public body operating between the Welsh Government and higher education providers. It regulates fee levels and provides funding teaching, research and innovation. HEFCW's remit includes supporting the delivery of Welsh Government priorities for higher education that have societal and economic benefits. This includes a role to 'promote effective and inclusive practices in higher education'. Its first objective in its [Strategic Equality Plan: March 2020 - April 2024](#) is to 'ensure higher education in Wales is sustainable and accessible for all who could benefit from it and/or work in it'

HEIs must also comply with equality and diversity legislation. Governing bodies are legally responsible for ensuring the institution's compliance. Under the [Equality Act 2010](#), education and training providers and other related services have a duty to make **reasonable adjustments** for disabled students so they are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to non-disabled students.

1.2. Impact of the Pandemic

The pandemic saw most learners, including disabled and neurodivergent students, being unable to attend education settings during periods of closure. Evidence from a range of sources, including the [Coronavirus and Me](#) survey, highlighted the barriers to home learning and challenges around access to electronic devices, pressures in the home environment and other challenges faced by people with additional learning needs.

While digital solutions were not suitable for all, the increased use of technological and digital solutions led to some learners benefitting from increased accessibility and participation. The Welsh Government's enquiry into disabled people's

experiences found there is a fear among disabled people that these opportunities could diminish once education settings can reopen fully.

2. Welsh Government action

In correspondence to the Committee on 9 February 2022, the Minister for Education and Welsh Language recognised the challenges faced by students with disabilities but stated that, as autonomous bodies, it is a matter for individual colleges and universities to ensure they meet their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and make reasonable adjustments. The Minister goes on to say that the Welsh Government does however work with the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) to ensure universities have compliant widening access and inclusion plans.

To ensure students with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) are supported to overcome barriers the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 established a new statutory framework to support children and young people aged between 0-25. Under the new system every learner with ALN will be given a statutory 'Individual Development Plan'. The Act commenced on a phased basis from September 2021 but the Welsh Government has not yet said when this will apply to learners in Year 11, sixth forms or further education colleges.

Digital 30 sets out the Welsh Government's ten year strategic framework for digital learning in the post-16 sector and aims to ensure:

Post-16 learning providers will seamlessly integrate digital technology into delivery; and encourage innovation in using inclusive, accessible and bilingual approaches to enhance the learner's experience.

Referring to the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018, the Minister says that the new framework aims to ensure all students with ALN in schools and colleges are 'supported to overcome barriers to learning and can achieve their full potential'. As part of the Digital 30 strategy the Welsh Government is also working with further education, work-based learning and adult learning providers on:

how digital technology can be integrated and embedded into delivery to enhance the learner's experience; and how learners and staff can be equipped with digital capabilities and confidence, under our existing ten year strategic framework for digital learning in the Post-16 sector

The Minister highlights the financial support the Welsh Government provides to ensure students can access higher education and explained that the level of funding is the same for those unable to attend 'in attendance' courses due to their disability. Eligible students can also receive a Disabled Students' Allowance for a designated higher education course for 'in attendance' and distance learning courses. In terms of accessing funding for further education, students who need to study remotely can also still access the Educational Maintenance Allowance or the Welsh Government Learning Grant Support.

The Minister notes colleges and universities' commitment to widen access and participation through the provision of dedicated disability and wellbeing teams who can offer support, including: making reasonable adjustments and promoting inclusivity and accessibility. Since the pandemic, the Minister said that colleges have significantly expanded their distance and digital learning delivery and highlighted over £21 million investment made by the Welsh Government to support students who are digitally-excluded and/or have accessibility needs. Building on research and reviews taken since the pandemic, the Minister confirmed that the Welsh Government are:

continuing discussions with learning providers and key stakeholders to help develop a more planned, sustainable and strategic approach to blended learning.

The Minister did note however that for some courses in engineering and construction and for the health and social care sector, awarding bodies will require mandatory workshop or placement hours.

Responding to the petitioner, the Minister says:

We understand that for some students attending college can cause anxiety and that this might particularly be the case for some neurodivergent students. Improving provision and support for neurodivergent learners is a priority for the Welsh Government and we are providing additional funding for colleges to pilot new curriculum approaches and for college staff to undertake training in order to develop specialist teaching and support approaches appropriate for engaging with neurodivergent learners.

3. Welsh Parliament action

The Children, Young People and Education Committee examined the impact of the pandemic on children and young people, including students in further and higher education between March 2020 and April 2021. The Welsh Government accepted the Committee's **recommendation** to give consideration to the benefits of digital and blended learning across the post-16 education sector to improve the learning experience and educational outcomes of learners.

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.

Jeremy Miles AS/MS
Gweinidog y Gymraeg ac Addysg
Minister for Education and Welsh Language



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1251
Ein cyf/Our ref JMEWL/00144/22

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

9 February 2022

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 22 January regarding the petition (P-06-1251) registered by Caley Crahart about securing the right to remote access learning for disabled and Neurodivergent people.

The Welsh Government recognises that the pandemic has brought about unprecedented challenges and changes for students, colleges and universities. We also recognise that the situation continues to provide additional worry and anxiety for students, and that many students face challenges during their time at university and that these challenges can often be exacerbated for students with disabilities and who require additional support.

With regard to Ms Crahart's petition, colleges and universities in Wales are autonomous bodies and are committed to widening access and participation in further and higher education for students from all backgrounds. This is underpinned with the aim of providing an excellent student experience during their time at college or university. They also have dedicated disability and wellbeing support teams who can offer a range of support and make reasonable adjustments, ensuring that the individual needs of students can be met and promoting inclusivity and accessibility across their campuses to enable students from under-represented groups to stay in further or higher education and complete their studies.

As autonomous bodies, it is a matter for individual colleges and universities to ensure they meet their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010; this includes making any reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled students can participate in the education and other benefits, facilities and services provided for students. The Welsh Government is unable to intervene in such matters.

We do however, through our work with HEFCW, ensure that universities have compliant widening access and inclusion plans, and, while HEFCW do not regulate equality and

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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.

diversity in higher education, they do have a role to support, champion and challenge HE providers to improve the equality and diversity of staff and students.

We are committed, along with our universities, to ensuring that students have the support they need to access higher education and to help them reach their full potential. We provide a generous student finance package and eligible students receive the same student finance as other students who are undertaking a designated 'in attendance' course, as confirmed by their university, and cannot normally attend owing to their disability.

When studying a designated higher education course, eligible students can also receive up to £31,831 in Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) for in attendance and distance learning courses, per academic year. DSAs are non-means tested, non-repayable grants, and are designed to cover in full, or as a contribution towards, the additional study-related costs a student may face as a direct result of their disability, long-term health condition, mental health condition or specific learning difficulty. DSAs can help with the costs of essential support such as equipment, non-medical help and travel.

We also recognise the importance of supporting students with additional learning needs in colleges and are introducing new statutory support system for children and young people aged 0 to 25 in Wales ALN. Through this new statutory framework we aim to ensure that all students with ALN in schools and colleges are supported to overcome barriers to learning and can achieve their full potential.

FE colleges offer a range of support and provision for young people with ALN and this includes supporting students who need study remotely. As a result of the pandemic, colleges have significantly expanded their distance and digital learning delivery and the Welsh Government has invested over £21m since the start of the pandemic in order to support students who are digitally-excluded and/or have additional accessibility requirements.

The nature of FE provision means that some courses lend themselves more than others to remote or digital delivery. Awarding body requirements often include mandatory workshop or workplace hours; this is particularly the case for courses in Engineering or Construction and for the Health and Social Care and Childcare sectors.

At a strategic level, the Welsh Government is working closely with FE, work-based learning and adult learning providers on how digital technology can be integrated and embedded into delivery to enhance the learner's experience; and how learners and staff can be equipped with digital capabilities and confidence, under our existing ten year strategic framework for digital learning in the Post-16 sector: [Digital 2030](#).

Building on various pieces of research and reviews undertaken during the pandemic, we are continuing discussions with learning providers and key stakeholders to help develop a more planned, sustainable and strategic approach to blended learning.

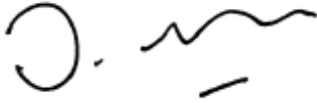
We understand that for some students attending college can cause anxiety and that this might particularly be the case for some neurodivergent students. Improving provision and support for neurodivergent learners is a priority for the Welsh Government and we are providing additional funding for colleges to pilot new curriculum approaches and for college staff to undertake training in order to develop specialist teaching and support approaches appropriate for engaging with neurodivergent learners.

With regards to student finance in the FE sector, our arrangements mean that students who need to study remotely can still access vital EMA or the Welsh Government Learning Grant Support even if they are not attending in person. The Financial Contingency Fund can also provide support with course-related costs for students on low income.

I welcome the comments raised and I can assure you and Ms Crahart that the Welsh Government is committed to working with our universities, colleges, key stakeholders and Unions to support students.

I trust the above provides clarity on the arrangements.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large 'J' followed by a series of wavy lines and a short horizontal stroke at the end.

Jeremy Miles AS/MS

Gweinidog y Gymraeg ac Addysg

Minister for Education and Welsh Language

P-06-1251 Secure the Right to Remote Access for Disabled and Neurodivergent People, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 28.02.22

Jeremy Miles wrote in reply to my petition for increased accessibility through remote access to education, that all universities have dedicated support teams for disabled students and that every university is expected to put in place reasonable adjustments to make education accessible. However, in my many discussions with other disabled students in Wales and England, we all have all noted that the support we get is performative and meets the bare minimum of our needs, to tick the boxes. Many of us are told that remote access is not a reasonable adjustment, but it was perfectly reasonable when it was for the sake of protecting the well-being of able-bodied students during the first year of the pandemic, why is it not reasonable to protect the well-being of disabled students now?

Many of us would find education more accessible if it were something that could be completed without over-exerting our bodies, the infrastructure exists already, the lectures are already being held, to record and subsequently distribute them would incur no extra costs to the universities. An anticipated objection I foresee is the matter of distribution of video including students, this obstacle is easily overcome, many universities and colleges already as common practice have students sign consent forms for this matter within the first week or two of each course. Students that don't want to be recorded can be put in separate sessions, each session is already delivered numerous times in a week, so again this can be achieved at no extra cost. Teachers have already been given the training on the use of cameras due to the pandemic. The government owes it to the disabled community to allow greater access to tools that can help us overcome common barriers.

Another point mentioned by the Minister of Education is that not all courses lend themselves entirely to being taught online, I know this well as a student of one such course. In such cases I propose that places of education do what they can to reduce the amount of times it is necessary for students to make the journey to them. This could be achieved through a crashcourse model, this is not a universal solution however as some students may feel they are better at processing information in small amounts regularly.

In my first year my attendance was high but my grades were low, due to the overexertion attending physically caused me. I'm in my third year now, my university hasn't offered me online lectures, and I scarcely attend yet my grades are at their highest because I am able to go through online resources at my own pace though, and commit more of my energy to completing work. I am incurring a debt of £9000 a year, to have access to a webpage, because I am unable to attend university at all currently I am robbed of the privilege of lectures, I am paying the same as able-bodied students who benefit much more from this course because the university grants them this privilege, but not me, they have refused.

With benefits facing cuts, and the increasing inaccessibility of these benefits, it only seems fair that the government make education as accessible as possible for the disabled community. Our supports have been taken away from us and for many of us, education is the only hope we have of, in some small ways, overcoming our disabilities and these obstacles put in our way. The government wants us to overcome our disabilities and become productive workers and yet through the lack of support granted disabled people this is not achievable for many of us. We are made to jump through hoops to get support (having to get doctors notes each time we need extensions and support, to prove that our chronic illnesses haven't disappeared for the sake of bureaucracy and nothing else, notes that we have to pay for which effectively makes this a tax on being a disabled student). Since the degradation of the welfare state disabled people have been fighting to keep our heads above the waves with many of us, unfortunately, drowning, at least offer us a lifebuoy, or better yet, help us onto the boat.

In my short life of 22 years, I have lost three disabled friends to suicide and one thing that affected each of them was education and academia being inaccessible, that existing within the institutionally ableist system of academia furthered their suffering as a disabled person. All three of these people were under the age of 25. How many friends will I have lost to this system by the time I'm 25, or 30, will there be anyone left to lose by the time I'm 35? Or will the neo-liberal machine eat them up, spit them out and stamp the life out of them all? This government owes it to the countless lives lost to ease our suffering, even in small ways. Is this government committed to saving the lives of young disabled people?

The friend most recently lost, died in the river that feeds the bay that the Senedd stands beside. They had completed an exam but their results weren't adequate, they had hope that education was the way in which they would find a happy stable life, after these results they lost that hope, and that loss was compounded by the pain and anguish living as a disabled person caused them. This was the final straw, and we will never get them back. How different would their performance have been if they were offered remote access? The gaps in their knowledge that affected their performance weren't caused by a fault in their ability or character, it was caused by the lack of this support. Lectures missed due to disabilities should be available to catch up on, in our own time, else we are being academically punished for the crime of being disabled. This government claims to acknowledge the social model of disability, described by the charity Scope like this "The model says that people are disabled by barriers in society, not by their impairment or difference." This barrier, this obstacle, is easily overcome and could serve a great benefit to many people.

I myself, have not yet found the ability to look at the River Taff since this loss, but I implore you when you leave this building and see the bay, the water that carried them out of this life, I implore you to think of them, of the lives lost too soon, and ask yourself: "Have I done right by them? Have I helped this country step in the right direction to support those who urgently need it?" Have I helped people, or have I acted in favour of the Taff overflowing with the bloated broken rotting rancid corpses of the disabled people I chose not to help?"

P-06-1253 Ban greyhound racing in Wales

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 07 Mawrth 2022
Petitions Committee | 07 March 2022

Reference: SR22/2201-8

Petition Number: P-06-1253

Petition title: Ban greyhound racing in Wales

Text of petition: In Wales we have one independent greyhound track racing once a week. Since April 2018, Hope Rescue & their rescue partners have taken in almost 200 surplus greyhounds from this track, 40 of which sustained injuries. There are plans for the track to become a Greyhound Board of Great Britain track, racing four times a week, greatly increasing the number of surplus dogs & injuries. Greyhound racing is inherently cruel & greyhounds have little legal protection. It is already banned in 41 US states.

More details

Campaign groups have collated data and evidence of poor welfare within greyhound racing in the U.K.

Alliance Against Greyhound Racing: <https://www.aagr.org.uk/category/why-is-greyhound-racing-cruel/>

League Against Cruel Sports: <https://www.league.org.uk/greyhound-racing>

There have also been press articles and undercover investigations in to greyhound racing:

RTE Investigates: Greyhounds Running For Their Lives

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZYTb2qBjIMM>



Panorama investigates: Doping and rigging bets

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I0p0bH5kIAk>

<https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2021/jun/26/activists-renew-calls-to-end-greyhound-racing-as-400-die-despite-lockdowns>

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/greyhounds-being-shipped-pakistan-illegal-23765480>

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/13086085/british-greyhounds-racing-dogs-mass-graves-bolt/>

A recent petition is due to be debated in [UK] Parliament after securing 104,882 signatures.

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/554073>

1. Background

There is currently one greyhound racing track operating in Wales - [The Valley Greyhound Stadium](#) in Ystrad Mynach, Caerphilly County. Races occur there once a week.

In the UK there are three independent race tracks which are licenced by the local authority (including The Valley Stadium) and 19 Greyhound Board for Great Britain (GBGB) licenced race tracks. GBGB tracks have additional rules designed to protect the animals' welfare (such as the presence of veterinary surgeons). GBGB doesn't have any tracks in Wales currently.

[Recently a deal has been completed](#) for sale of The Valley Stadium. The buyer's intention is to run it as a GBGB licensed racing track. The buyer expects the stadium to need further development and for it to be used as a GBGB racetrack by 2023, increasing racing to four times per week.

While GBGB publishes [injury and retirement statistics](#) at its tracks, there is no requirement for independent tracks to report. However, The Valley Stadium has some [data on its website](#). This states that out of the 4,652 runs by greyhounds in races, 24 greyhounds suffered a serious injury (typically, a bone fracture) during a race. This represents a serious injury rate of 0.5 per cent.

GBGB commissioned research shows that greyhound racing 'core industry' income in Great Britain was £119 million in 2012. Data for Wales is not available.

1.1. Current regulation of greyhound racing

The *Animal Welfare Act 2006*, (the 2006 Act) includes general animal welfare provisions. The 2006 Act allows action to be taken where there is evidence of cruelty to an animal or a failure to provide for an animal's welfare needs. These provisions could apply where greyhounds are at tracks or kept at trainers' kennels.

Section 12 of the 2006 Act gives regulation-making powers to the Welsh Ministers to promote the welfare of animals. Section 13 provides the Welsh Ministers with powers to introduce licensing schemes to protect animal welfare.

In England, regulations have been made by the Secretary of State under section 13 of the 2006 Act; *The Welfare of Racing Greyhounds Regulations 2010*. These regulations aim to protect racing greyhounds in England and provide that all operators of greyhound racing tracks must obtain a licence.

There are currently no specific legal protections for racing greyhounds in Wales.

In 2020 there was a petition to the UK Parliament to ban greyhound racing in England. The UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) responded by saying it supports high welfare for racing greyhounds but considered a ban to be unnecessary.

1.2. Stakeholder views

In response to this Senedd petition, a spokesperson from GBGB said:

The petition claims that our sport is inherently cruel; this statement is utterly false and insulting to the thousands of hardworking individuals within our sport.

As the regulator of licensed greyhound racing, the welfare, safety and wellbeing of our canine athletes is our highest priority. As an unlicensed track, the Valley Stadium and the greyhounds which race there currently sit outside of our regulatory remit. Should the Valley wish to operate as a licensed track, we would welcome being able to further safeguard the welfare of the greyhounds which race there.

Caerphilly Council published [a masterplan for Ystrad Mynach](#) in 2019. With regards to The Valley Stadium it states:

It is ideally located to capitalise on the many visitors to the area and there is opportunity to expand and increase the potential of the site as a tourism destination. Furthermore, there is opportunity for spin-off between this site and potential hotel and restaurant development on adjacent land.

Several animal welfare groups have concern for the welfare of racing greyhounds and are calling for further regulation or a complete ban.

[For example The Dogs Trust](#) doesn't believe the English regulations go far enough as they only cover what happens at the track. They are calling for regulation of all stages of racing greyhounds' lives as well as a levy on bookmakers to fund greyhound welfare. The Dogs Trust has recently commissioned a review of racing greyhounds' welfare in the UK and is expected to report in the first half of 2022.

[The Alliance Against Greyhound Racing](#) calls for a phased ban of greyhound racing in Great Britain, "in order to end the unnecessary deaths and suffering of greyhounds due to racing".

The links provided with the petition text provide further reading on animal welfare concerns.

2. Welsh Government action

In 2020, the Welsh Government and Animal Welfare Network for Wales published a [Voluntary Code of Best Practice for the Welfare of Racing Greyhounds](#). [RSPCA Cymru commented](#): "The Code was a big step forward for the Sector, but greater work is needed to ensure compliance".

[During passage of the Wild Animals and Circuses \(Wales\) Bill](#) in 2019, the appropriateness of other animal exhibits was raised in the context of the ban on wild animals in travelling circuses.

Between August and November 2019 the [Welsh Government consulted](#) on draft regulations and guidance to regulate animal exhibits. The regulations were to be introduced under the 2006 Act and be called *The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Animal Exhibits) (Wales) Regulations 2020* and guidance. However, the

proposed regulations included an exemption for greyhound racing. The summary of responses to the consultation stated:

Substantial evidence was received which centred on concerns about welfare issues and a lack of self-regulation of greyhound racing in Wales. Those respondents that raised this issue were of the view that greyhound racing should fall within the scope of the draft Regulations.

[...]

With regard to proposals to include greyhound racing as a licensable activity, the evidence received has been noted. As no responses were received from organisations representing the greyhound racing sector, we will seek to invite their views before considering this further, as this will enable us to consider the various arguments before reaching a view as to whether or not greyhound racing should fall within the scope of the Regulations.

Following the consultation, regulations did not come forward.

On 4 November 2021, the Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd, Lesley Griffiths (the Minister) published the Animal Welfare Plan for Wales 2021-26. This includes a plan to introduce a licensing requirement in relation to animal exhibits and animal establishments – “**potentially** including mobile animal exhibits, **greyhound racing**, and animal welfare establishments [emphasis added]”.

The Welsh Government plans to undertake further consultation with an aim to bring forward new requirements possibly under the *Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (Wales) (Regulations) 2021*. The Minister’s letter on this petition states that officials will be engaging with a “broad range” of interested parties, including:

- the LA Enforcement Project lead, Gareth Walters;
- Caerphilly Local Authority;
- the joint AWWN/CAWWG [Animal Welfare Network Wales/ Companion Animal Welfare Group Wales] working group; and
- other relevant stakeholders.

Welsh Parliament action

The issue of greyhound racing has been raised several times in Plenary during the Sixth Senedd.

In answer to a question regarding inspection of the The Valley Stadium race track the Minister said:

Inspections at Wales's remaining greyhound racing track have been arranged through a partnership delivery programme funded by the Welsh Government, which is managed and co-ordinated by Monmouthshire trading standards and the greyhound working group, a sub-group of the Animal Welfare Network Wales, one of our key partnership networks.

She went on to say:

Clearly, if we looked at a ban of greyhound racing, we would have to look at evidence, consultation. It will all take a little while, and, obviously, legislative capacity would have to be available for me to do that. But it's certainly something - And you just mentioned something right at the end that I have only recently found out, and that is that there are only eight countries in the world that still allow greyhound racing, and we are one of them.

The Economy Trade and Rural Affairs Committee held an evidence session on animal welfare in November 2021 during which greyhound racing was discussed with animal welfare organisations. The Dogs Trust told the Committee it was commissioning an independent review of greyhound racing across the UK to determine if a ban is appropriate. RSPCA Cymru told the committee it is constantly reviewing its position on greyhound racing. It noted that Wales was behind England in terms of regulation so the inclusion of greyhound racing in the Animal Welfare Plan for Wales 2021-26 was welcome.

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



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1253
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/00032/22

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair – Petitions Committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

14th February 2022

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 20 January, regarding Petition P-06-1253 Ban Greyhound Racing in Wales.

Animal welfare is a priority for the Welsh Government and our recently published Animal Welfare Plan for Wales 2021-26 (AWPW) includes a framework for the realisation of the four animal welfare Programme for Government commitments. It also outlines how we will integrate a broad range of ongoing animal welfare policy work, including statutory guidance for existing Regulations, licensing of animal exhibits, microchipping of dogs and cats, welfare of animals in transport, and Codes of Practice. The need for review of existing animal welfare legislation is also recognised, along with maintaining some flexibility should new policy actions be required: <https://gov.wales/animal-welfare-plan-wales-2021-26>

Our AWPW presents a visionary and challenging programme for action which, to become a reality, will require working in partnership with specialist external stakeholders, compliance with the requirements associated with public consultations, and the availability of evidence which is both robust and proportionate to support any new legislation.

A petition with UK Government to ban greyhound racing in order to end unnecessary deaths and suffering of racing dogs closed on 30 April 2021 receiving 104,885 signatures. The UK Government has not announced plans to ban greyhound racing, but have stated in their response that the Greyhound Board GB are to improve their guidance on animal welfare.

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

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

I am aware of the petition to ban greyhound racing in Wales and have received several pieces of correspondence on this issue. I am also aware of a possible change in ownership of the only greyhound-racing track (independent) in Wales and the declared intention of the owners to seek registration with the Greyhound Board GB. It is currently the intention of the Welsh Government to consider greyhound racing in Wales as part of a future licensing scheme, as set out in our AWPW.

In 2019 some funding was secured via the Welsh Government/Local Authority Partnership Delivery Plan to enable Caerphilly County Borough Council to carry out welfare inspections at the Valley Greyhound Stadium during the evening / weekend races. The objective was to facilitate inspections under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and the voluntary Code of Practice for the Welfare of Racing Greyhounds. Unfortunately, the onset of Covid-19 resulted in a number of delays to the implementation of the plan. However, at least three Caerphilly CBC inspections have now taken place at the Valley track. The Local Authority Enforcement Project, funded by Welsh Government, has been approached to support these and future inspections.

In relation to the policy development for the possible licensing of greyhound racing, my officials will be engaging with a broad range of interested parties, including:

- the LA Enforcement Project lead, Gareth Walters;
- Caerphilly Local Authority;
- the joint AWWN/CAWWG working group; and
- other relevant stakeholders.

It is not possible at this stage to provide a specific date for the introduction of potential new legislation in this area, as consideration of the issues involved is likely to be embedded within other policy development work. However, the AWPW sets out overarching timelines to indicate how the work will progress in this and other areas.

Yours sincerely,

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

Lesley Griffiths AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Materion Gwledig a Gogledd Cymru, a'r Trefnydd
Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd



28th February 2022

Dear Petitions Committee,

Ban Greyhound Racing in Wales Petition: Ref P-06-1253

Thank you so much for sending on the petition response from the Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales. We are pleased to see that animal welfare is a priority for the Welsh Government and were encouraged by the commitments in the Animal Welfare Plan for Wales 2021-26.

We note the reference to greyhound racing in the wider U.K., and the recent petition to the U.K. Government. The situation in the rest of the U.K. is distinct from Wales, in that there are 19 licensed tracks so an immediate ban wouldn't be feasible due to the infrastructure and the significant number of greyhounds that would be displaced. A phased ban with interim welfare improvements would be needed. It is important to consider the situation in Wales independently, and with just one unlicensed track a ban is easily workable as the economic impact would be minimal and welfare organisations would collaborate to ensure the safety of the displaced greyhounds.

It should be noted that the sale of Valleys track to Dave Barclay, a Greyhound Board of Great Britain (GBGB) promoter, has now been completed. Whilst Hope Rescue worked with Valleys track through its Amazing Greys project, we took in around 200 greyhounds surrendered due to their racing owners having links with Valleys track (although not all would have raced there) over a 3 year period. In addition, we took in over 40 dogs that suffered serious injuries racing at Valleys track, mainly fractured legs. Sadly, five of those died from their injuries. Data is available as evidence.

If the stated intention to licence the track as a GBGB track proceeds, then we will see a significant expansion in the number of races and greyhounds needed at Valleys to fulfil the proposed contracts for live-streamed racing. The contracts involve live-streaming races to betting offices across the world and is the main source of income for GBGB licensed greyhound racing stadia. Based on track averages from GBGB's own published statistics for 2020 and uplifted by 20% to reflect track closures during Covid, we are likely to see around 225 serious

injuries and 25 deaths every year – a significant leap from the current figures at Valleys. We would also see around 345 surplus greyhounds needing rescue spaces every year, at a time our sector is under immense pressure due to the huge surge in pet ownership during the pandemic and rescue spaces are at a premium.

Whilst we are pleased that Welsh Government has greyhound welfare firmly on its radar and intends to consider greyhound racing in Wales as part of a future licensing scheme, we would urge them to consider a ban as the ultimate goal. We strongly believe that regulation of greyhound racing in the rest of the U.K. has not sufficiently improved greyhound welfare, and that regulation will never be able to truly protect greyhounds racing in Wales from injury and death. Key welfare members of the U.K. Greyhound Forum including Greyhound Rescue Wales, Dogs Trust, RSPCA and Blue Cross are all currently reviewing their positions on greyhound racing, and we await the outcome of their reviews with interest.

Key welfare concerns around regulated/licensed racing include:

- Injury and deaths – 3,575 serious injuries and 401 deaths reported by GBGB in 2020 (during Covid). This excludes injuries and deaths on the 3 independent tracks including Valleys.
- Number of surplus dogs the animal welfare sector is expected to find homes for – 5,484 in 2020 and again excluding those from independent tracks.
- Lack of traceability – we found discrepancies with the tracking of greyhounds throughout their racing career, including dogs racing at Valleys that were recorded as being retired and given to rescue centres for rehoming.
- Doping – there are many published reports of doping incidents in greyhound racing. A trainer convicted of doping at Swindon track, then suspended from Perry Barr track was still able to race at Valleys track where 3 of his dogs broke their legs and sadly one died. Doping offences are dealt with in-house by GBGB despite being an offence under the Animal Welfare Act 2006.
- Health and behavioural issues seen in dogs surrendered from GBGB tracks. A VetCompass report in 2019 recognised that racing greyhounds carry health legacies from inherent breed predispositions as well as impacts from their prior racing careers.

These include dental issues, skin complaints, undiagnosed injuries and lameness, fleas, worms, fear and anxiety

- Configuration of tracks and sharp bends that increase injury risks. Valleys track proudly describe their “eye-wateringly sharp first bend”. Professor Andrew Knight revealed the unavoidable injuries to greyhounds racing on dangerously configured oval tracks in his “Injuries in Racing Greyhounds” 2018 report.

- Overbreeding and fate of surplus greyhounds. 83% of greyhounds racing in the U.K. are bred in Ireland. RTE Investigates revealed in 2019 that 6,500 were exported from Ireland and 6,000 were killed for not making the grade, with 1000% more pups bred than needed. It also included distressing footage of surplus greyhounds being killed at a slaughterhouse.

Whilst we recognise GBGB has introduced some recent financial schemes including the injury recovery scheme which provides a 50% grant for certain injuries up to £2,000, and a £400 retirement bond, these financial incentives only cover a proportion of the true costs and resources needed to rehome surplus and injured greyhounds. The fact we need injury recovery and rehoming schemes speaks volumes about the welfare issues caused by continuing to race greyhounds.

We note the funding provided by Welsh Government to undertake welfare inspections at Valleys track. This is particularly welcome, especially since the Amazing Greys project was stopped in April 2021 from taking both injured and surplus dogs following the sharing of a U.K. wide petition to ban greyhound racing. Due to a lack of transparency, we do not know what is currently happening with these dogs which is extremely concerning given the numbers we were taking from the track previously. We would hope that as a very minimum the track is complying with the Voluntary Code of Practice for The Welfare of Racing Greyhounds (Wales) and trust that the inspections will ensure compliance, particularly with regards to a vet presence at race meetings. Previously there was not vet at the track, and it was left to our Amazing Greys volunteers to ensure injured dogs were taken straight to the vets for emergency treatment, although it should be noted not all trainers were willing to give us their injured dogs and we could not ascertain what their fate was.

In conclusion, the proposed licensing of Valleys track as a GBGB track and planned expansion of greyhound racing in Wales is extremely concerning. Whilst regulation is an option and will marginally increase the welfare of greyhounds whilst they are racing, the net result for Wales will be a significant increase in the number of injuries, deaths and surplus dogs needing rescue spaces.

The foundation of any animal welfare strategy, including Welsh Government's Animal Welfare Plan for Wales 2021 to 2026, is that prevention is better than cure. There are not any other cohorts of dogs we can stop coming in to rescue centres in Wales. Providing funding to repair or amputate the broken legs of injured dogs, contributing towards the rehoming costs of surplus dogs and putting government resources in to enforcing regulations is not a viable long-term solution. We need a more strategic and sustainable



Save Our Strays – give them Hope

solution to the welfare problems created by the racing industry, and we strongly feel that a ban is the only solution and with just one unlicensed track currently in Wales, is a feasible solution.

We would welcome the opportunity for Welsh Government to undertake an inquiry into greyhound racing in Wales, covering both existing and proposed practices, ahead of a wider debate in the Senedd to evidence and inform its position on greyhound racing going forward.

Yours sincerely,

Vanessa Waddon

Vanessa Waddon

Founder and Transformation Manager

Agenda Item 4.1

P-05-1106 Introduce Personal Health Budgets and Personalised Care in Wales

This petition was submitted by Rhys Bowler having collected a total of 779 signatures.

Text of Petition:

Rhys has Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy and lives in daily fear for his life, left alone for hours hoping the ventilator he needs to breathe doesn't break. He must choose between poorly funded social care and an NHS Continuing Healthcare package that takes away his choice over who cares for him.

If Rhys lived in England he would have a personal health budget, allowing him to use NHS Continuing Healthcare while still being able to choose who cares for him. This is not available in Wales

Additional Information:

I'm Rhys, 33 and living with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy in Pontypridd, Wales. I have extremely limited mobility and need a ventilator to breathe.

I've employed my own care assistants for decades and have a lot of experience of training and employing them. I've had bad experiences using agencies and not having a say in who cares for me. I want to choose the care assistants I want. I want to know who is coming in my home to help me with my intimate personal care, and I want them to be people I trust and have trained in how best to provide my care. Don't let my experience go to waste!

I want a Personal Health Budget so I can have both 24 hour care and a choice over who my care assistants are. This has been available in England since 2014, it's time Wales took this seriously and started giving people real choice and control about the care they receive.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Pontypridd
- South Wales Central

Julie Morgan AS/MS
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Deputy Minister for Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1106
Ein cyf/Our ref JMSS/10640/21

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

13 January 22

Dear Jack,

I write in reply to your letter dated 03/12/2021 about the petition to introduce Personal Health Budgets and Personalised Care in Wales.

The clear, unambiguous expectation in Wales is for personalised, seamless integrated health and social care that enables individuals to maintain voice and control where they wish to.

We know, however, through personal experiences shared by Rhys Bowler and others that there continue to be concerns regarding people's ability to exercise voice and control over their care, when they are not able to receive direct payments under NHS Continuing Healthcare (CHC).

We have a Programme for Government commitment to improve the interface between CHC and direct payments.

I am committed to looking at different options around the interface between CHC and direct payments, including how direct payments may be used for CHC recipients, which would be similar to personal health budgets in England.

I have published a revised improved version of the CHC Framework (the 2021 Framework) in July. This included some specific measures to improve the interface between CHC and direct payments. The intention was for this to be implemented at the end of November, however due to a number of reasons, including ongoing pressures of Covid-19 and winter pressures, we have deferred implementation until 1 April 2022.

Before publishing the new CHC Framework in July, officials engaged with stakeholders, including Rhys Bowler, to consider possible amendments, deliverable within the legal

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Correspondence.Julie.Morgan@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.

boundaries of the Framework that could be included to support voice and control in this area. We identified the following mechanisms:

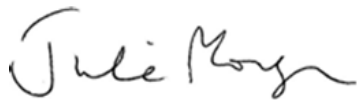
- The LHB employing personnel (either directly or via an agency) who were previously employed by the individual via direct payments
- The LHB commissioning an Independent User Trust, potentially set up by a family member of the person receiving care, to manage that person's care.

An Independent User Trust (IUT) is where a relative of the individual or other relevant parties set up a trust which becomes the provider of care for the individual. The LHB then contracts with the trust to provide specified health and social care services for the individual.

We are also considering options for the longer term, including the option of legislating to allow health boards to provide direct payments under CHC.

We held a positive working group meeting with a range of stakeholders, including Rhys Bowler, on 16 December, to discuss these issues.

Yours sincerely,

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

Julie Morgan AS/MS

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Deputy Minister for Social Services

P-05-1106 Introduce Personal Health Budgets and Personalised Care in Wales, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 03.03.22

Thank you for revisiting our petition for a Personal Health Budget in Wales.

After multiple meetings, letters and conversations between the government, Rhys Bowler, myself, and others in the working groups. I feel disheartened and utterly let down by the Welsh government. Speaking as a person with complex care needs, who lives independently in my own home with 24/7 care, this new revised framework does not go far enough. There is a strong emphasis on individuals requiring continuing health care going into care and requiring nursing care. The fact is many people who require funding through a joint package or solely CHC, do not require nurses! Where are the allowances for these people? And surely anyone requiring CHC funding will ALWAYS require social funding too. We have a life, we need to have social care be as important as healthcare, we don't cease to live independently because we require more care.

The framework is essentially no different from previous versions. Joint packages and IUTs are again just given a courtesy paragraph, and the suggested move towards the freedom of a Welsh care funding system, akin to the English PHBs is nowhere.

Yet again we are told we are given voice and it will be person centred, but actually, it reads and will be used, to take away our power, independence and choice.

The authorities and government should be encouraging independent living, not institutions wherever they can.

We are left feeling hopeless for our future, and unheard yet again. Are the government moving at all in the right direction?

We have enclosed articles from Luke Clements and Ann James, who have given us guidance throughout. Hopefully, their superior legal knowledge, and discussions of actions that can be implemented now, can be heard by the government, where our pleas have not.

Regards

Samantha Stickland and Rhys Bowler

Continuing NHS Healthcare and adults Briefing by Luke Clements ~ updated February 2020.

Section 47 of the 2014 Act is concerned with the contested question of 'Continuing NHS Healthcare' – for which Wales has particular problems.[1] In an attempt to address some of these problems, in 2014 revised guidance was issued Continuing NHS Healthcare: The National Framework for Implementation in Wales[2]). At the time of this update (February 2020) the outcome of consultation on updating the Framework was awaited

In relation to this question both the English and Welsh Bills commenced with the same phrasing. However, a number of amendments were made to the English Bill to ensure that the current boundary between local authority responsibilities and the NHS (as defined in the Coughlan Court of Appeal judgment [3]) remained unchanged. Sadly, no such amendments were made in Wales. The

result is a potentially serious problem, since the wording in the Act is materially different to the wording used by the court in Coughlan.

The Coughlan judgment confirmed that local authorities were prohibited from funding nursing care that the NHS was required to provide but that they could fund nursing care if it was (1) merely ancillary or incidental to the provision of social care support and (2) of a 'nature' that one would expect a social services authority to provide. Although section 47 makes it unlawful for local authorities to fund nursing care unless it is 'incidental or ancillary' to social care, it contains no prohibition in relation to the second element – namely as to the 'nature' of the nursing care'.

In the absence of firm action by the Welsh Government, LHBs will inevitably seek to argue that the Act materially undermines the rights of patients to 'Continuing NHS Healthcare' funding. Unless this is the (unstated) intention of the Welsh Government, this failing will need to be addressed directly in the regulations and in the Code. A clear statement would also be welcome – on the lines of the statement made by the English Minister that:[4]

The provisions [in the English Act] are not intended to change the current boundary—let me place that clearly on the record—and we do not believe that they will have that result. The limits on the responsibility by reference, as now, to what should be provided by the NHS remain the same'.

It is however strongly arguable that the silence of the Welsh Government on this question (and the lack of any formal adjustment in the funding allocations for health and social care in Wales) is best interpreted as evidencing an intention that the health / social care boundary remain unchanged by enactment of the 2014 legislation.

NHS and Direct Payments

In *R (Harrison) v Secretary of State for Health and others* (2009),[5] the High Court held (in an English case) that the NHS Act 2006 did not permit direct payments to be made by NHS bodies. Although in England the Act has since been amended to allow direct payments, this is not the case in Wales.

It is arguable that *Harrison* was wrongly decided. An appeal against it was withdrawn when the case became academic due to the implementation of the right to direct payments for NHS patients in England (patients eligible for continuing care funding). The argument that *Harrison* was wrongly decided concerns the fact that the 2006 Act does not expressly prohibit direct payments – the judge simply decided that it should be interpreted as not permitting such payments. If the courts were confronted with a strong human rights case (where for example someone is being threatened with forced institutionalisation) then the Act would have to be interpreted 'so far as is possible' to give a human rights compliant meaning. Such a case would rely on the public law obligation to comply with Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (respect for private and family life) and the commitment of the Welsh Government to adhere by the principles in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (and Article 19 in particular).

In *Gunter v SW Staffordshire PCT* (2005) [6] Collins J held that there was nothing in principle in the NHS Acts to preclude a health body making direct payments to an Independent User Trust (IUT) which would then make arrangements for the health care needs of the profoundly disabled 21 year old applicant, stating:

It seems to me that Parliament has deliberately given very wide powers to [health bodies] to enable them to do what in any given circumstances seem to them to achieve the necessary provision of services. I have no doubt that this could involve the use of a voluntary organisation such as an IUT as the supplier. There seems to me to be no difference in principle between an IUT set up specially for a small number of persons or an individual and a nursing or other agency so far as the defendants are concerned. It would obviously be necessary for a member of the defendants to be a trustee so as to ensure that money was properly and prudently spent.

Where a person is jointly funded by a LHB and local authority, then there would appear to be nothing in principle for the local authority not to make the direct payments and in so doing, to use funds transferred to it by the LHB (as its contribution) in pursuance of its powers under NHS (Wales) Act section 194.

Where a LHB is unreasonably refusing to be flexible in relation to such payments (i.e., concerning the use of an Independent User Trust or to use its powers under section 194 of the 2006 Act, it is incumbent on the Welsh Government to intervene to resolve this deadlock. In such a case the Government could – for example – direct a recalcitrant LHB or an NHS Trust by using its powers under sections 12 and 19 of the 2006 Act.

[1] See for example, Wales Audit Office Report Implementation of the National Framework for Continuing NHS Healthcare 13 June 2013.

[2] Welsh Government Continuing NHS Healthcare: The National Framework for Implementation in Wales (2014).

[3] R v. North and East Devon health authority ex p Coughlan [2000] 2 WLR 622: [2000] 3 All ER 850.

[4] Public Act Committee Report 16 January 2014 (page 205/208).

[5] [2009] EWHC 574 (Admin) 23rd March 2009.

[6] [2005] EWHC 1894 (Admin) 26/08/05.

[7] Welsh Government Continuing NHS Healthcare: The National Framework for Implementation in Wales (2014).

NHS Continuing Health Care and Direct Payments in Wales

Disabled People in Wales of all ages who are eligible for NHS Continuing Health Care and who want to remain living in the community – have been left without a legal route to retain control of their care and support through a Direct Payment.

The Welsh Labour Party manifesto (p.18) stated an intention ‘to work with the Disability Equality Forum to improve the interface between Continuing Health Care (CHC) and Direct Payments (DP).

The Government has set up a Working Group to consider this 'interface' and to offer solutions. However, by suggesting that there is a way of 'improving' the interface' is a curious – if not confusing – turn of phrase. It holds out the idea of there being a remedy to this fraught situation – albeit one that the Welsh Government and Local Health Boards (LHBs) have signally failed to propound for over a decade.

The remit of this group is unclear and can only be seen as a gesture to people with complex health needs that the Government is wanting to work with them to achieve a solution.

Surprisingly, the matter of NHS CHC and Direct Payments has not been attended to in the revised 'draft' framework and this is a significant oversight. Welsh Government has been aware of the impact on many disabled people of the legal constraints on providing Direct payment for NHS Continuing Health Care for many years as outlined by the Welsh Government Director of Social Services in his letter of February 2016.[1]

The section in the draft Framework (para 6.52. – 6.55) is wholly inadequate to address the problems experienced by individuals who are eligible for NHS CHC and who wish to retain the benefits of the flexibility, choice and control provided by a direct payment arrangement.

Once an individual is eligible for NHS CHC, the terms of section 47 Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 make it unlawful for a local authority to provide support under the 2014 Act and (as the draft Framework states at para 2.10), the LHB becomes responsible for providing a 'full package of health and social care' for that individual. NHS law as it applies in Wales does not permit LHBs to make direct payments equivalent to those made by local authorities under the provisions of sections 50-53 of the 2014 Act. This is a legal 'fact' and referred to as such in the following account.

The new framework should state this explicitly – that under the law as it exists in Wales, that when an individual is assessed as eligible for NHS CHC, it is unlawful for direct payments to be provided to the individual to enable them to purchase the health and social care needs that they have been assessed as requiring.

The framework should not try to disguise this fact by saying "it is not unlawful for local authorities and health boards to work together to provide individuals with voice and control in respect of their health and social care needs. This includes the pooling of budgets and other mechanisms to ensure people experience seamless care."

The above statement creates confusion for recipients and potential recipients of NHS CHC and creates an expectation of LHBs and LAs that they are legally constrained from delivering.

The Framework must provide 'grown up' and explicit advice as to how this problem is to be resolved: legally resolved and resolved to maximise the well-being of individuals. The framework needs therefore to: (1) address the cultural problem within the NHS which obstructs flexibility, choice, and control; and (2) provide practical advice as to what can be done.

The impact of this 'legal fact' and the failure of the Welsh Government and LHBs to take positive remedial action means that many disabled people, their families, and carers experience severe and unnecessary disruption / harm to their fundamental rights: harm measured in terms of loss of employment, education, training, leisure, normal independent living opportunities, distress and anxiety. This impact engages fundamental human rights for example Article 8 of the European

Convention on Human Rights (respect for private and family life) and Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ('CRPD') – the right to independent living.

These rights require a cultural change in the way NHS commissions support to address the complex community care and support needs of disabled people – since a failure to do this may leave individuals with no realistic option apart from institutionalisation.

Currently disabled people who are assessed as having primary health care needs are being forced to relinquish their hard fought for rights to manage their own care in Wales. For many in Wales who see disabled people in England having the right to continue with managing their care through a Direct Payment this is difficult to understand and accept.

Both LHBs and LAs are adversely impacted by the amount of administrative time taken trying to resolve situations where individuals are refusing to be assessed for NHS CHC – out of fear of the loss of their direct payment and with this the loss of the benefits this arrangement provides for them – notably flexibility, choice, and control over their care arrangements. In many contexts it appears that the current inadequate arrangements mean that LHBs gain financially at the expense of LAs. This is due to the fact that many individuals who are de facto above the legal limits of social care (in terms of s47 of the 2014 Act) remain funded by LAs because they refuse an NHS CHC assessment and LAs feel compelled to continue their funding (albeit illegally) because of the severe impact a funding withdrawal would have on their fundamental human rights.

This may also lead to many needs that have been identified and are eligible for NHS Healthcare are not met because the LA is not able to or prepared to fund these needs. This will consequently leave people with an inadequate response to their assessed and eligible needs for care and support.

The barriers that stand in the way of LHBs providing direct payments to individuals who are eligible for NHS CHC do not derive from the Framework – but from the NHS legislation in Wales and the effect of section 47 Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. There are no 'flexibilities' proposed in the Framework for overcoming this problem. All the Framework does is to: (1) state what can be done if a person is not eligible for fully funded CHC (see below); and (2) to use meaningless platitudes to suggest that somehow a 'spirit of co-production' can resolve the legal problem or that somehow the loss of a right to a direct payment can be assuaged by being told that they have not in fact 'lost their voice, choice and control over their daily lives'. This is an utterly unacceptable approach for major guidance when there is a widespread consensus that this is an issue engaging fundamental human rights.

Jointly Funded LHB and LA Packages of Care

It is imperative that NHS CHC is not confused and conflated with a joint package of health and social care provision.

Joint funding arises where a person is not eligible for fully funded NHS CHC but has substantial health care needs. These health care needs are assessed as being beyond the powers of a local authority social services department.

In these circumstances, the revised Framework should set out that a Direct Payment is a choice afforded to all disabled people who are assessed as having both health and social care needs that is funded by both the local authority and local health board – and that the full costs of the community package (including the community ‘nursing’ costs) can be funded by way of a direct payment.

This should be supported by clear and unambiguous guidance to LHBs and LAs about funding of joint package and the mechanism that needs to be established should people wish to continue with a Direct Payment or indeed choose a Direct Payment to organise their care and support.

A Joint Package of LHB and LA care should not become the default in Wales to circumvent the lacuna in Welsh legislation or a resistance to using a legal solution like an Independent User Trust. Nor should it be used to quieten the resistance of disabled people who are at risk of losing their right to manage their care through a Direct Payment because their needs are above the legal limits of social care. This will potentially leave people without their eligible needs being met and having to pay for their social care provision when in fact they are eligible for an NHS Healthcare package which is free at the point of delivery.

Fully Funded NHS CHC packages and Independent User Trusts

The Welsh Government has the option of amending primary legislation to allow for NHS funding to individuals through a direct payment for NHS CHC (i.e. on the same lines as in England). Even if this was a serious consideration it will not be a solution in the short /middle term.

In the current legal situation, it appears that there is only one uncontested way of addressing many of the problems resulting from the absence of a provision in Welsh NHS law providing for the making of direct payments – namely the use of Independent User Trusts (IUTs). IUTs were first developed as a mechanism to overcome the absence of a right to direct payment for social care (i.e. prior to the Community Care (Direct Payments) Act 1996.[2] In *Gunter v SW Staffordshire PCT* [2005] EWHC 1894 (Admin) Collins J held that there was nothing in principle in the NHS Acts to preclude a health body making direct payments to an IUT which would then make arrangements for the necessary support needs of the individual.[3] The trustees in such an arrangement could be a Centre for Independent Living, the disabled person’s family or friends or some other support organisation.

IUTs have been promoted by disabled people’s organisations [4] as a way of addressing the problem of direct payments not being available from the NHS. In England, prior to the national rollout of a right to direct payments for disabled people living in the community who were eligible for NHS CHC funding, the Department of Health issued guidance on the use of IUTs.[5] What is needed is for the Welsh Government to issue similar – but updated – guidance and for this to include a simple template example of an IUT.[6] It is unreasonable (and could lead to significant inequalities) to expect each LHB to develop separate templates (and guidelines for their use) – and also unlikely, since none have (so far as we are aware) notwithstanding this is a long-standing problem.

The delay in providing guidance as to how IUTs can be developed and used by disabled people to enable them to enjoy their independent living entitlements is unconscionable and (given the widespread recognition of the role IUTs can play) and there is no reason why further delay should occur (i.e., delay by suggesting a ‘pilot’ when IUTs are already a legal option).

The draft Framework needs to be revised and guidance provided to LAs and LHBs without further procrastination. The impact on individuals makes it incumbent on Welsh Government to fulfil its manifesto promise.

[1] Welsh Government Director of Social Services and Integration dated 10 February 2016.

[2] See for example L Clements and P Thompson *Community Care and the Law* (Legal Action Group 6th ed 2017) paras 10.104 – 10.109.

[3] See also Rhydian *Social Welfare Law in Wales Direct Payments and NHS Continuing Health Care* .

[4] See for example, A Holman and C Bewley *Trusting Independence: a practical guide to independent living trust* (Values into Action 2001) and J Fitzgerald *Using independent user trusts to manage personal health budgets* (Mitchell James Ltd 2011)

[5] Department of Health *Personal Health Budgets Guide. Options for managing the money* (DoH 2012).

[6] A simple precedent for an IUT was, for example, provided in L Clements *Community Care and the Law* (Legal Action Group 4th ed 2017) at page 888.

Agenda Item 4.2

P-06-1200 Make horse tethering, with or without shelter, illegal and an act of cruelty in Wales

This petition was submitted, having collected a total of 4,637 signatures.

Text of Petition:

In Wales it is currently not illegal to tether horses. Everyone must have seen a beautiful horse tethered on a short chain at the side of a road with no shelter from the harsh weather.

RSPCA appear have no power do anything about it! If a dog was tied up on the side of a busy road, there would be outrage. Both animals matter!

Laws must be passed to stop this terrible cruelty to such sensitive creatures! These animals have no quality of life, it's an absolute scandal.

Additional Information:

HorseWorld a welfare charity created a #BreaktheChain campaign with the hopes of changing the law. Despite being dubbed as cruel and dangerous this practice remains legal.

Visit the website www.BreakTheChain.org.uk for further information.

Would be so proud of Wales if they lead the way to finally stop this dreadful practice. The RSPCA is also opposed to the practice as they say compromises animal welfare in so many ways.

Defra Code on practice for horses and the Welsh Government Code of Practice states that horse tethering is not a suitable method of management of an animal. Have to ask why therefore it's not illegal?

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Cardiff North
- South Wales Central



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1200
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/00038/22

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions Committee

3rd February 2022

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 20 January, regarding Petition P-06-1200: Make horse tethering, with or without shelter, illegal and an act of cruelty in Wales. Your letter makes particular reference to calls from Blue Cross and the RSPCA for enhancements to local authority enforcement.

Our [Programme for Government](#) includes four kept animal welfare commitments and these are included in our five year [Animal Welfare Plan for Wales](#). Enshrined in both, is our plan to develop a national model for the regulation of animal welfare, introducing registration for animal welfare establishments, commercial breeders of pets, and animal exhibits. Recognising the need to support effective enforcement, our plans also include a commitment to support the training of local authority enforcement officers. Our Local Authority Enforcement Project provides an example of our current commitment in relation to dogs and the project is going from strength to strength.

Our AWPW which is challenging, includes the requirement to have a national model for enforcement, registration and regulations and to improve the training and skills for LA enforcement officers. We have made it clear we will be looking at all existing animal welfare licensing legislation as well as the potential expansion across other areas. We are currently considering how best to support the continuation and expansion of this model to ensure a sustainable, comprehensive and consistent approach to enforcement. We will be working in close collaboration with enforcement agencies and via a joint working Group which includes members of the Animal Welfare Network for Wales and the Companion Animal Welfare Group for Wales.

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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.

It is evident we cannot complete all this work in the first few years and we will have to focus on some key priorities included in the plan, some of which have been raised by the third sector organisations. However, in line with the stated intent of the plan, we will consult on the outcome of the prioritisation work, especially in relation to existing legislation which may require updating and any gaps in our legislation.

These commitments illustrate how animal welfare and the responsible ownership of animals are priorities for the Welsh Government and the Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework Group. We are committed to maintaining high standards of welfare for all animals kept in Wales at all stages of their lives. Equines, like all domesticated and captive animals, are afforded protection under the Animal Welfare Act 2006. Under this legislation, it is an offence to cause unnecessary suffering to an animal, or for an owner (or keeper) to fail to provide for its welfare needs.

Finally, as mentioned in the correspondence from Blue Cross and the RSPCA, the Welsh Government Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses (the Code) is a good tool for training and was updated in 2018 and the Control of Horses (Wales) Act 2014 was introduced at the request of enforcement authorities, commoners and welfare charities. The Act itself provides further powers for Local Authorities to combat the abandonment of horses and ponies found grazing on land where the owner of the animals does not have the consent of the land owner.

We can certainly consider inclusion of *future* enforcement training on other species of animals as we progress work on the AWPW and will, in the meantime, continue to work with key stakeholders, including Local Authorities, third sector organisations and the other UK Administrations, to ensure any measures we introduce have a lasting impact on the welfare of animals in Wales.

Yours sincerely,

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

Lesley Griffiths AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Materion Gwledig a Gogledd Cymru, a'r Trefnydd
Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd

Agenda Item 4.3

P-06-1228 Give secondary teachers a bonus for marking and standardizing summer 2021 official assessments

This petition was submitted by Lisa M Williams, having collected a total of 1,252 signatures.

Text of Petition:

As a result of the pandemic, teachers in Wales are responsible for marking, standardizing and moderating GCSE, AS and A2 assessments instead of examination boards. This is in addition to their usual teaching timetable and marking the work of other learners. Some teachers have only been released for one hour to carry out the work and, inevitably, it has had to be completed after working hours and on weekends. KS4 and 5 teachers in Wales deserve a bonus for their efforts, just like teachers in Scotland.

Additional Information:

<https://www.thenational.scot/news/19094405.nicola-sturgeon-update-400-payment-secondary-school-teachers-lecturers/>.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Cynon Valley
- South Wales Central



By email

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair, Petitions Committee

28 January 2022

Dear Mr Sargeant,

Petition P-06-1228 Give secondary teachers a bonus for marking and standardising summer 2021 official assessments

Thank you for your letter on behalf of the committee in relation to the above petition, asking about the findings of our survey on grade setting. Following summer 2021, we have been gathering information on teachers' perceptions of the centre determined grading process. Our survey and interviews have focussed on gaining a deeper understanding of how the centre determined grading framework was used, teacher experiences of and opinions on the process (including the manageability of it), confidence in the outcomes and views on how the approach could be improved. The interviews following the survey have now concluded and we are expecting to publish the research report in May.

During this research project and in our stakeholder engagement work over the last two years, we have had feedback on increased workload and heard similar concerns to those set out in the petition. We also heard concerns that, in pre covid times, some teachers had the opportunity to undertake paid work for the awarding body, for example as examiners, and that they had lost income that they would otherwise have expected from this work. The briefing we have received from our research supplier on interim findings from the research also suggests that, while the time committed by teachers to grading in 2021 was substantial, it was also variable by the seniority of the staff and likely in line with how the centre organised its approach to assessment and grading and the extent to which other elements of workload were deprioritised.

In Scotland we have seen the challenges of administering a 'bonus' pay out as eligible teachers there received a one-off payment of £400 for the additional work.¹ This is a complex issue, and we would suggest that there are others better placed to comment on teacher workload and the legalities of any such payment.

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-employers-on-one-off-gbp400-payment-for-teachers/>

We will ensure that we will share with the committee our research report when we publish.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Philip Blaker', written in a cursive style.

Philip Blaker
Chief Executive

P-05-1228 Talu bonws i athrawon uwchradd am farcio a safoni asesiadau swyddogol haf 2021, Gohebiaeth – Deisebydd i'r Pwyllgor, 26.02.22

DEISEB P-06-1228

- mae'n amlwg bod Cymwysterau Cymru wedi derbyn adroddiad y cwmni ymchwil a'u darganfyddiadau llawn.
- mae Cymwysterau Cymru felly yn cydnabod y llwyth gwaith cynyddol a oedd ar athrawon yn Haf 2021, a bod rhai athrawon wedi colli incwm fel arholwyr.
- codir y pwynt ganddynt fod anghysondebau yn yr amser a neilltuwyd i raddio a phennu graddau wedi amrywio o ysgol i ysgol ac o ran statws yr athro a hynny felly wedi ychwanegu at y baich gwaith.
- gan fod Cymwysterau Cymru wedi derbyn yr adroddiad ac yn medru dyfynnu ohono, pam felly ydy'r proffesiwn a'r cyhoedd yn gorfod aros tan fis Mai iddo gael ei gyhoeddi yn swyddogol, ar ddechrau y tymor arholiadau? Oes yna agenda cudd o ryw fath, i'w gyhoeddi yn dawel pan fo athrawon yn rhy brysur i'w ddarllen a chorddi? Mae gorfod aros mor hir am yr adroddiad yn hollol annerbyniol yn fy marn i. Dylai Cymwysterau Cymru gyhoeddi'r adroddiad nawr ac fe ddylech chi fynnu eu bod nhw, gan eu bod yn atebol i chi.
- efallai bod y system yn Yr Alban o dalu'r bonws wedi bod yn un gymhleth ond mae'n ddigon clir - dylai unrhyw athro a oedd yn gorfod marcio, safoni, cymedroli TGAU, AS, a Lefel A tu hwnt i'w gofynion ac oriau gwaith statudol dderbyn bonws fel ad-daliad am y baich gwaith ychwanegol. Dim ond ddoe ar 'Work Your Proper Hours Day' 25/2/22, datgelwyd yr ystadegau canlynol i'r cyhoedd,

' According to an analysis by the TUC, 31% of UK teachers did unpaid overtime in 2021, up from 25% in 2020. The average weekly unpaid hours for teachers doing overtime rose from 10.7 in 2020 to 11.2 in 2021'.

- Ydy Jeremy Miles AS, Gweinidog Addysg a'r Gymraeg wedi darllen yr adroddiad ar y baich gwaith ar athrawon yn Haf 2021? Beth yw ei farn?

Document is Restricted

Agenda Item 4.4

P-06-1230 Every Second Counts: Install a defibrillator at every school in Wales for the public to access

This petition was submitted by Rob Shill, having collected a total of 64 signatures.

Text of Petition:

A lot of people do not know where their closest defibrillator is.

If a defibrillator is installed outside every school on a perimeter gate/fence/wall then everyone will know that if they need a defibrillator, they only need to look for their closest school to get access.

Access should not be restricted to devices at locations only when the establishment is open. Public access 24 hours a day, 7 days a week is essential.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Aberavon
- South Wales West

Jeremy Miles AS/MS
Gweinidog y Gymraeg ac Addysg
Minister for Education and Welsh Language



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1230
Ein cyf/Our ref JMEWL/00150/22

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

9 February 2022

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 20 January 2022, where you asked what the best way forward would be to make the information regarding available funds to purchase defibrillators available to organisations and schools.

Unfortunately the application process for a defibrillator which was referred to in my response late last year has now closed.

As you will be aware the previous funding was facilitated through a partnership between the Welsh Ambulance NHS Trust and Save a Life Cymru, and also appeared on the Welsh Government's Save a Life Cymru pages. Additionally Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust have previously offered defibrillators to schools by contacting them directly.

Currently, we are considering the potential of a further round of funding; and would utilise a similar process. In addition, we would also consider promoting the drive through our regular school and colleges communication groups and platforms.

Yours sincerely,

Jeremy Miles AS/MS
Gweinidog y Gymraeg ac Addysg
Minister for Education and Welsh Language

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
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Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Gohebiaeth.Jeremy.Miles@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Jeremy.Miles@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 4.5

P-05-949 SAVE COWBRIDGE OLD GIRLS' SCHOOL FROM DEMOLITION

This petition was submitted by Sara Pedersen having collected 2,080 signatures online and 3,442 on paper (not final), a total of 5,522 signatures.

Text of Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to protect the former Intermediate School for Girls' in Cowbridge, Vale of Glamorgan. This was the first intermediate school to be built specifically for the education of girls in Wales (and England) and is the subject of a planning application for demolition. Failure to protect it will lead to the loss of a nationally important historic asset.

Opened in 1896, Cowbridge was the first girls' intermediate school to be built in Wales (and England) as a result of the Welsh Intermediate Education Act of 1889, a pivotal moment in Welsh History. Amid its contemporaries, Cowbridge was highly unusual in including accommodation for boarders from the outset and largely funded by a local philanthropist.

The original character of the school survives to a very high degree, both internally and externally, including the original hall and staircase. Only 5 comparable (of 95) schools are listed across Wales. A survey of them all confirms that Cowbridge survives to an equivalent degree to some and a better degree than others.

The architect, Robert Williams, was a pioneer of his time and renowned for being a radical, prominent advocate of building conservation, national pioneer of social housing, promoter of the Welsh School of Architecture and proponent for the publication of building literature in the Welsh language. He later went on to work in London and then Egypt for the Davies Bryan family, where many of his buildings still stand and are nationally protected.

In summary, the former Cowbridge Intermediate School for Girls' survives as a prominent and attractive testimony to a pivotal moment in Welsh history and the equal opportunities afforded to underprivileged girls of the time. We urge the Welsh Government, as custodians of our heritage, to protect this building either through listing or the provision of additional social housing funding to allow its conversion.

Additional Information

Reference: Scourfield (2019). FORMER COWBRIDGE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL, ABERTHIN ROAD, COWBRIDGE – AN HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL APPRAISAL.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Vale of Glamorgan
- South Wales Central



1st March 2022

Dear Members of the Petitions Committee,

RE: Petition P-05-949. Save Cowbridge Old Girls' School from Demolition

On behalf of everyone who signed the above petition and who supports our campaign, I wish to thank you for giving it your consideration and for putting it forward for a debate. We welcomed the cross-party support received during the debate and that it also highlighted the wider issue regarding the loss of historic buildings across Wales.

The response from the Deputy Minister for Arts and Sports was very disappointing although not unexpected given the resistance to scrutiny that has been evident throughout this case. More concerning was the number of inaccurate and misleading statements that were included in the Deputy Minister's response, specifically surrounding the listing criteria. In her statement she acknowledged that the school has historic interest which, according to the legislation, would justify granting it listed status. However, she incorrectly stated that to be a candidate for listing a building must have historic and architectural merit. She based her justification for not listing the school or allowing further review of the case on this false statement. More in depth analysis of the statement is enclosed.

We now urge you to seek clarification from the Deputy Minister regarding these statements in view of the fact that these were provided as a reason to not accept the requests of the petitioner and supporting Members of the Senedd to seek an independent peer review. Indeed, the comments provide further evidence as to why an urgent review of the way in which Cadw operates and advises Welsh Government is needed.

Yours sincerely,

Sara Pedersen
SAVE Cowbridge Girls' School Campaign Group

Response to the statement made by Dawn Bowden, Deputy minister for Arts and Sports at the end of the “Debate on petition P-05-949 Save Cowbridge Intermediate School for Girls from demolition”

Dr Tudur Davies BA MA PhD FSA

Outlined below are specific statements made by the Deputy Minister during the debate on Petition P-05-949 are either contested by research undertaken by Scourfield (2019) and Davies and Scourfield (2020) or are demonstrably incorrect. In light of these issues, a review of the Deputy Minister’s listing decision is requested. The sections in question from the Deputy Minister’s statement are as follows:

Statement No. 1:

“So, **I do fully acknowledge the historical interest of the school**, and I agree it will be a huge shame to see it demolished. However, **to be listed by the Welsh Government, a building must demonstrate architectural and historic qualities of national significance**. So, **it has to meet both those criteria**, as set out in that national listing criteria.”: 310

I would challenge the statement that the school does not have architectural qualities of national significance, as argued by Scourfield 2019 and Davies and Scourfield 2020. These two reports specifically note architectural elements that are possibly unique to the school at Cowbridge and that features belonging to the original 1895-6 school survive to a very high degree. However, I do welcome the deputy minister’s acknowledgement of the historic interest of the school. Nevertheless, I must point out that the deputy minister is incorrect about the need to demonstrate both architectural **and** historic qualities of national significance. The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act of 1990 and the Historic Environment Wales Act 2016 state ‘architectural **or** historic interest’ when discussing criteria for listing rather than ‘**and**’. By publicly acknowledging the historic interest of the school, the minister has by implication acknowledged that the school does in fact meet the criteria for listing. I would therefore invite the Deputy Minister to re-consider the government’s position on the listing of this building given her acknowledgement of the building’s historic significance.

I would also note that in his justification of the listing of listing Grove Park School in Wrexham in 2016, the RT Honourable Mark Drakeford made specific reference to its historic interest in the education of women and that “the history of women’s education in Wales – as in women’s experience more generally – is under-represented”. Given the pivotal role the School in Cowbridge played in the education of women, especially in science, it surely deserves similar recognition through listing.

Statement No. 2:

“**This building has effectively been assessed against the listing criteria three times**: first, as part of the national community listing resurvey of Cowbridge **in 1999**, then by Cadw historic buildings specialists in response to a request **in 2018**, and again by an independent expert **in 2020**. The later assessments included the careful scrutiny of all the evidence provided by the campaigners. The conclusion was that, unfortunately, the criteria are not met in this instance.”: 310

Our campaign group has repeatedly asked Cadw to provide evidence for the listing decision of 1999 as part of the listing resurvey of Cowbridge. Scourfield’s report on the merits of the school for listing suggests that it could in fact have been missed out due to the architectural richness of Cowbridge (Scourfield 2019: 21). Indeed in 1999, the school would have been in active use, and its position on

the outskirts of the town, away from the town's conservation area and other prominent listed building may have meant that it was not considered alongside other buildings in the town. Nevertheless, as also noted by Scourfield, our appreciation of buildings like Cowbridge School is 'likely to be greater and better-informed than at the time of the original survey, two decades ago' (Scourfield 2019: 21).

It should also be noted that the research undertaken by Scourfield on the architectural and historic significance of the school was undertaken after the 2018 assessment undertaken by Cadw, which was therefore undertaken without the full range of facts currently known about the school. Whilst the 'independent' assessment made in 2020 did indeed make use of information provided in the Scourfield (2019) report, several of the conclusions made are highly subjective, unsubstantiated and contradicts the views of more than 20 relevant specialists who support the listing decision (see <https://oldgirlsschool.wales/experts/>). The majority of these 20 specialists have previously written to the former Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism, Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas, but their views were dismissed as a 'protest letter' rather than expert opinion that should have been considered as evidence of the school's significance.

There are also significant concerns relating to the independent nature of Richard Hayman's report due to undeclared conflicts of interest. An immediate relation of Richard Hayman works as an architect and has a number of historic buildings within his portfolio. At the time of Richard Hayman's assessment, this member of the family was working in partnership with the proposed developer of the School, Hafod Housing Association on another scheme (as confirmed in a social media post) Whilst Richard Hayman's integrity is not questioned, serious concerns are raised about the procurement process if this significant conflict of interest was not noted. In addition, due to the long-standing relationship of working alongside the Cadw inspectors involved in this case, there is concern over true impartiality.

A further concern is the lack of transparency in the listing decision. An internal report of the listing decision was undertaken by Cadw in response to supplemental research on the school undertaken by Davies and Scourfield (2020) but was purposely withheld from the authors as it would "have the effect of inviting further unnecessary debate" (Cadw memo DET/00488/20).

It is, therefore, contested that a truly independent assessment of the listing decision has taken place that considers the full range of evidence pertinent to the school. The behaviour exhibited by of Cadw as part of this listing process has displayed a distinct lack of transparency and accountability in their decision-making process. This also highlights the need for the establishment of an advisory panel for the Welsh Historic Environment as stipulated by the Historic Environment (Wales) Bill of 2016 to advise the Welsh Government on the implementation of policy, which has yet to be undertaken. It is for the reasons listed above why a truly independent review of the listing decision has been sought to ensure full transparency and accountability relating to the listing decision for the school.

Statement No.3:

"This building no longer survives as built, its form has been compromised by large-scale alterations in 1909 and more recently, as recently as a few years ago, with the insertion of UPVC windows.": 313

The extent to which the building has been compromised by the 1909 extension is highly subjective and indeed contested by Davies and Scourfield (2020) and by 20 senior professionals and academics who have written to the deputy minister's predecessor, Lord Dafydd Elis Thomas. The addition of UPVC windows in the school is largely a cosmetic issue that can be easily reversed, and indeed several buildings have been listed with UPVC windows, "often having 'modern glazing' in their description" (Davies & Scourfield 2020: 17) – as such this should not be taken into consideration as serious alteration to the building as part of the listing decision.

—
**Children, Young People
and Education Committee**

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Senedd Committee Chairs

18 February 2022

Findings of our 6th Senedd priorities engagement with children and young people

Dear Committee Chairs,

As part of the consultation that we carried out to inform our priorities for the 6th Senedd, the Senedd's citizen engagement team undertook a series of engagement activities with children and young people on our behalf. The purpose of that engagement was to find out more about what matters most to children and young people.

The citizen engagement team heard directly from 127 children across seven sessions. They engaged with children and young people across Wales, in a diverse range of locations and settings. They targeted children that we as a Committee find difficult to reach, such as children under 12 and children from low income families. The team reported their findings back to us during our meeting on 27 January.

I and my fellow Committee members were struck by the clarity with which the children and young people communicated their concerns and priorities. Clear themes emerged from the engagement work, with nuances that reflect the diversity of the children who contributed and their different experiences of the world around them. They spoke about deforestation, littering, social isolation, mental health, poverty, hospital waiting times, infrastructure, diversity, social media and much more. They shared their views - and their visions for a better Wales – clearly and articulately.

After considering the report, we felt strongly that we should share it with you. Everything that the children and young people raised with us is directly relevant to at least one other Senedd Committee. Much of it is relevant to various Committees, and some of it should resonate with us all.

I have therefore attached the citizen engagement team's report to this letter. I hope that you are able to find the time to consider it and incorporate its findings into your work.

I appreciate that there is so much work for Senedd committees to do, and it can seem as if there is never enough time to do it all. The Children, Young People and Education Committee therefore warmly welcomes any opportunities for joint working where it is in our mutual interests – or more importantly, in the mutual interests of children and young people in Wales - to do so.

Yours,



Jayne Bryant MS

Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.