

# Teach Welsh children about Wales' colonisation of Patagonia

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 12 Ionawr 2021  
Petitions Committee | 12 January 2021

Reference: RS20/14837

**Petition Number:** P-05-1084

**Petition title:** Teach Welsh children about Wales' colonisation of Patagonia

**Text of petition:** Wales' colonisation of Patagonia must be introduced into the curriculum. It is taught to be a beautiful unity of two countries worlds apart when in reality it erases civil rights history. It was always taught as a means to keep the Welsh language alive by introducing it to a South American country, when in reality Welsh people were introduced to Patagonia to "civilise" communities which derives from racist ideologies which don't get taught in school.



# 1. New curriculum

Subject to the Senedd passing legislation, the new age 3-16 Curriculum for Wales will be introduced in all maintained schools and publicly funded nursery settings from September 2022 on a phased basis. The Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill was introduced to the Senedd on 6 July 2020. The Bill sets out the four purposes of the curriculum:

- To enable pupils and children to develop as ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives;
- To enable pupils and children to develop as enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work;
- To enable pupils and children to develop as ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world;
- To enable pupils and children to develop as healthy, confident individuals, ready to live fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

The Welsh Government has emphasised that the new Curriculum for Wales will be **purpose-driven rather than content-driven**. Specific learning content is not stipulated in the same way as under the current national curriculum.

The Bill sets out six Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLEs) for the new curriculum and the mandatory elements within them. The AoLEs are:

- Expressive Arts
- Health and Well-being
- Humanities
- Languages, Literacy and Communication
- Mathematics and Numeracy
- Science and Technology.

The mandatory elements within the AoLEs will be English; Relationships and Sexuality Education; Religion, Values and Ethics and Welsh.

History will be taught within the Humanities AoLE. The Humanities AoLE also encompasses geography, religious education, business studies and social studies. The new curriculum is non-prescriptive and does not include a list of topics that all schools must teach.

The Bill provides for a 'What Matters Code' to set out key concepts of learning and experience in each AoLE (including Humanities) and that schools' curricula must

encompass each of these concepts. The Welsh Government has published 'Statements of What Matters' in the [Curriculum for Wales documentation](#). This is intended to provide the 'national approach' which the [Minister for Education says](#) will ensure consistency for learners.

The [provisional statutory guidance on the Humanities AoLE](#), was published in January 2020.

The Welsh Government's [Guidance to help schools and settings develop their own curriculum](#) (part of the statutory guidance) contains some specific guidance for teachers in designing history in their curriculum. This states that school curriculum design should (amongst other things):

- develop a rich context for exploring the concepts of governance, economy, power, leadership, diversity; culture, ethnicity, equality and inequality, justice, rights, conquest, social, political and economic ideologies, social organisation and structures, trade, agriculture and industry, power and protest, peace, conflict and cooperation, revolution, devolution and empire

## 2. Welsh Government action

In July 2020 the First Minister appointed a Task and Finish Group to audit public monuments, street and building names in Wales associated with the slave trade and the British Empire and also touching on the historical contributions to Welsh life of people of Black heritage. The objective of the audit was to collect and review the evidence, after which the Group were to identify issues for a possible second stage. The Task and Finish Group comprised independent members led by Gaynor Legall and supported by a project officer and officials in Cadw.

The report, [the Slave Trade and the British Empire](#), published in November 2020 identified 209 monuments, buildings or street names, located in all parts of Wales, which commemorate people who were directly involved with the slavery and the slave trade or opposed its abolition.. The document states that it seeks to capture information, not provide a set of answers.

The First Minister said in a [Written Statement](#) on the publication of the audit:

this is the first stage of a much bigger piece of work, which must now, collectively, consider how we move forward with this information as we seek to honour and celebrate our diverse communities. I will not pre-empt any recommendations that may come from this wider work but

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this audit must be the start of an open conversation with our communities.

### 3. Patagonia

In 1865, a first wave of settlers sailed to Patagonia. Led by the Reverend Michael D Jones they had set out to create a new colony where the Welsh culture, language, and Protestant nonconformist religion could be preserved free from English influence. The Reverend Jones, a nonconformist minister, chose a remote location because he believed that Welsh people who emigrated to English-speaking parts of the world, like the US, were too easily assimilated and lost their customs, language and religion.

A number of recent articles have suggested that despite the friendship between the Welsh settlers and the indigenous people, the impact of the Welsh colony was not entirely benign:

- [The Welsh Way of Colonisation in Patagonia: The International Politics of Moral Superiority \(tandfonline.com\)](#)
- [Not that kind of settlement - Institute of Welsh Affairs](#)

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