

P-06-1170 An immediate independent review of the Tier 1 and Tier 2 selection process in the WPWL, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 04.07.21

Firstly, I do appreciate the Welsh Government having a meeting with the FAW to discuss matters. Myself, and all clubs involved, thank you. We share in the vision of developing and improving Women's football in Wales. Our players and volunteers have been doing this for nearly a decade or more in some cases. However, I do have some concerns and points to highlight to you.

The FAW receives public money from the Welsh Government. Therefore I would argue that this restructure is a matter for the government. I would also argue that the FAW, because they receive public money, should adhere to the Freedom of Information Act and share their scoring with clubs and the wider public. At the moment, they have refused to do so. If the FAW are not adhering to the law, surely this is a matter for the Welsh Government also? If the FAW are allowed to act unaccountable to anyone but themselves, surely corruption and cover ups could happen. The people who run the clubs that have been directly affected are all volunteers, who all give back to their communities, and surely they should be represented and protected by the Welsh Government.

This letter fails to address what the petition is asking for: an independent review into the whole process. We have grave concerns. The panel who made the decision were all FAW staff members who claim know the women's game in Wales, however none of these members ever come to watch any of our games. None of these people have ever spoken to any of the volunteers who run the clubs. Furthermore, [REDACTED], who is the head of women's football in Wales organised the restructure and sat at the head of the selection committee. Clubs were worried to raise concerns and approach [REDACTED] with problems or concerns as this could have been a black mark against us moving forward. If the panel was independent surely this problem would have been eradicated. This process was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic which I think was unreasonable, and also that the process placed more emphasis on media than competitiveness in the league.

There was a conflict of interest during the selection process. The CEO of TNS, [REDACTED], is very high up in the FAW and all those involved in the panel work under him. TNS did not have a women's side. Their previous women's side left the club because they were treated so poorly, they joined Wem Town Ladies. If you approached them they could give you evidence about this also. TNS, despite not having a women's side, were granted a place. With [REDACTED] son now head coach of the set up. Without transparency, this looks like corrupt decision. Especially, as Abergavenny WFC, the club I play for, have been in the top league for nearly ten years, never relegated, and are statistically the fourth best women's side in Wales – but we were chosen to be demoted.

If the FAW are committed to supporting clubs I would like to request that they meet Abergavenny WFC, Britton Ferry and Cascade together in person and create an open discussion. I would also suggest that the FAW get in contact with a development plan for us. We would also like written confirmation that if we win Tier 2 we will be automatically promoted back into Tier 1. [REDACTED] has said previously that the 'criteria can change at

any time.' We are concerned [REDACTED] will change the criteria and not give us enough time to achieve it. We would like the criteria for Tier 1 now, along with targets, so we can work towards them over the next year. Until this is written in writing by the FAW, these assurances and promises mean nothing.

We once again urge the Welsh Government to proceed with a truly independent review into this whole process. We also request that they instruct the FAW to be transparent and publish the scoring and process completely for clubs and the public to see. We would also like the FAW to actively communicate with the clubs affected with a development plan, and we would like written assurance that if we win Tier 2 that we would be promoted back into Tier 1. We would also like the criteria for next season to be published in advance so we can work towards that.