

Petitions Committee

Meeting Venue:
Committee Room 1 – Senedd

Meeting date:
14 July 2015

Meeting time:
09.00

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



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Agenda

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2 Evidence Session (Pages 32 – 44)

P-04-576 Allow Children in Wales to Have a Family Holiday During Term Time

- Bethany Walpole
- Helen Weedon

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P-04-576 Allow Children in Wales to Have a Family Holiday During Term Time

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Agenda Item 2

P-04-576 Allow Children in Wales to Have a Family Holiday During Term Time

Petition Wording

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to review the guidance to Local Authorities on head teachers being able to authorise absence for family holidays during term time. Many families from poor backgrounds can only afford to go on holiday during term time, as holidays are about 60% more expensive during the holiday period. Also, many families where parents work are unable to take time off during the school holidays. Holidays can be extremely educational, giving the children awareness of the world in which we live.

Petition raised by: Bethany Walpole-Wroe

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 15 July 2014

Number of signatures: 1008 – An associated e-petition has collected over 10,300 signatures.

P-04-606 Ensure schools exercise their statutory powers under regulation 7 of The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 without interference or bias.

Petition wording

We ask the National Assembly for Wales to ensure that schools are free to exercise their statutory powers under regulation 7 of The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 without interference from bodies such as regional educational consortia and local authorities and without threat of penalisation through school inspection, performance judgement and banding processes.

Local authorities in Wales and their consortia are recommending that schools do not exercise their statutory powers under the above legislation leaving more families exposed to the threat of penalty notices under the Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013 than would have been otherwise. These recommendations are made on the basis that they can improve attainment despite the lack of evidence that absence of the type allowed under regulation 7 of The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 results in poorer attainment.

Currently schools in Wales can be penalised through inspection, performance judgement and school banding processes for authorising legitimate absences such as sickness, family holidays or other events or instances which enable families to participate fully in a normal, private family life.

These recommendations and processes bias schools against the authorisation of legitimate absence and make schools reluctant to exercise their statutory powers under regulation 7 of The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010. This can damage the home/school relationship and child well-being. Where a family disagrees with a decision to refuse authorisation of absence on the grounds of equality, human rights

or child well-being there is no independent route of appeal. Where a family disregards a decision to refuse authorisation of absence the issue of a penalty notice and potential criminalisation can result. There is an economic impact on the Welsh tourism and leisure industry which provides employment and income to many of our families.

Additional Information

Regulation 7 of The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 gives schools the discretionary power to authorise up to 10 days absence during a school year for family holidays and more than 10 days absence in exceptional circumstances.

Schools are being advised against exercising this power by their local authorities. They are feeling pressured to improve school attendance figures by Estyn, the education and training inspectorate for Wales, who can penalise them if attendance falls below a certain level.

The drive to improve attendance is based on an assumption that it will improve educational attainment. This is an over-simplification of a very complex issue. Attendance and attainment are linked but a causative relationship is not proven. Research shows that absence for family holidays does not affect attainment at primary school level, and a small degree of absence is unlikely to have any effect at secondary school level. ("A Profile of Pupil Absence, 2011, DfE").

A school's refusal to authorise an absence which is allowable under the law can seriously damage the home/school relationship, particularly if the family believe that the absence is important to their child's well-being and take their child out of school anyway. The family can receive a penalty notice (fine) or be criminalised.

There are many legitimate reasons why children and families need the flexibility to be absent from school during term time which include difficulty obtaining annual leave during school holidays, important family events, geographical remoteness from non-resident parents, grandparents and

extended family. Families employed in the Welsh tourism and leisure industry have felt a significant economic impact from the English term time holiday ban this year. The Good Childhood Report 2014 identified school as only ONE of the ten aspects of life with the greatest influence on child well-being. Family, home, finances, friends, health and choice were among the others.

Petitioner: Pembs Parents Want a Say / Rhieni Pembs eisiau cael dweud

First considered by the Committee: 9 December 2014

Number of Signatures: 812 electronic signatures

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

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Agenda Item 3.1

P-04-642 Save The Filter – An Established Youth Stop Smoking and Prevention Service

Petition wording:

We the undersigned call upon the Welsh Government to fund The Filter – an established youth stop smoking and prevention service.

Additional Information

Almost 5,500 people in Wales die from smoking-related diseases each year and 21% of Welsh adults currently smoke. Smoking is an addiction of childhood – a classroom of young people take up smoking every day in Wales; more must be done to reduce this number.

The Filter project, funded by Big Lottery Wales for three years and delivered by ASH Wales Cymru, has been a huge success in educating young people in disadvantaged communities about smoking. But the service is under threat as its funding comes to an end in October 2015. The service offers:

- Face-to-face workshops with young people
- Training for professionals and young volunteers • Stop smoking support via social media
- A youth-dedicated website providing information and advice

The Filter's youth development team has worked with over 5,000 young people face-to-face at more than 200 sessions across Wales, all supported by a strong social media and online offering. The team has made crucial links in disadvantaged communities across Wales, where smoking rates are highest. The team has also trained over 750 professionals who work with young people.

Over the past 3 years this initiative has provided an invaluable service, tackling our biggest public health priority in Wales. Helping young people to quit, and preventing them from taking up smoking is a key priority for Welsh Government, outlined in the Tobacco Control Action Plan.

Cardiff University independently evaluated The Filter and concluded that all three strands of the project were feasible, flexible and adaptable to deliver.

The Big Lottery Wales grant comes to an end in October this year and without any further funding from Welsh Government or Public Health Wales, we will have no service working with young people outside of school settings. A service like The Filter is critical to securing a smokefree generation and tackling the biggest public health concern that we face in Wales.

Petition raised by: ASH Wales Cymru

Date petition first considered by Committee:

Number of signatures: 334 Online signatures

Mark Drakeford AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-642
Ein cyf/Our ref MD/01659/15

William Powell AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

27 June 2015

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter of 4 June seeking my views on Petition P-04-642 Save The Filter – a youth smoking and prevention service from ASH Wales Cymru.

Elen de Lacy, chief executive and Jamie Matthews, head of communications and public affairs from ASH Wales met with the Deputy Minister for Health on 30 April to present the evaluation of The Filter project. While the evaluation indicated the three strands of the project were feasible, flexible and adaptable to deliver, the evaluation was less clear on outcomes for young people who were involved in the project. For example, the evaluation could not determine how many young people were deterred from starting smoking as a result of participating in the project.

Prior to the petition being submitted to the National Assembly for Wales, the Welsh Government had not been formally approached to consider funding The Filter project.

Following the submission of the petition, ASH Wales wrote to the Deputy Minister requesting the Welsh Government consider funding The Filter. However, a funding proposal was not included with the letter.

In order to give proper consideration to the possibility of funding this project, a detailed proposal would need to be submitted to my officials. The proposal would need to include supporting evidence as well as outlining clear deliverable outcomes, which the project can achieve and which will benefit young people in Wales.

Best wishes,

Mark

Mark Drakeford AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff

Pack Page 48

Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)

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Correspondence: Mark.Drakeford@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Printed on 100% recycled paper

Elen de Lacy
Chief Executive
ASH Wales Cymru
14 – 18 City Road
Cardiff
CF24 3DL

08 July 2015

Dear Assembly Members

We very much appreciate the time your committee is taking to look at The Filter project and our petition to save the service.

The Filter is a youth-dedicated stop smoking and prevention service, managed by ASH Wales Cymru and is the only service of its kind in Wales. The Filter was launched across Wales at the beginning of 2013 with the support of Big Lottery funding. The Filter offers a wide range of services including: face-to-face workshops, bespoke training for professionals and youth volunteers, engagement through social media, online stop smoking support and information via a youth dedicated website: thefilterwales.org.

The Filter service is unique and ASH Wales Cymru has built up a wealth of youth expertise and learning during the life of the project. The Filter's approach is flexible and can be adapted to a range of professional disciplines, youth settings and groups of young people. It is a multi-level service, peer-led intervention which educates and empowers young people about the facts and myths about smoking.

The service is delivering on many aspects of the Welsh Government's Tobacco Control Action Plan. We know the service is needed - the equivalent of a classroom full of young people start smoking every day in Wales; but in the period 1st April 2014 – 31st March 2015, **only 66 young people** aged under 18 were treated by Stop Smoking Wales compared to **6,544 adults** aged 18-60+

Responding to the letter from the Minister for Health and Social Services to William Powell AM on 27th June we would like to clarify a few points:

- The petition was started on 19th May
- Following the launch of the petition, Welsh Government officials asked us to submit a detailed business case to them.
- The business case has now been submitted to the Welsh Government however we wanted to continue the petition to show the National Assembly the wider support across Wales for the project and to gather support from AMs.

The Filter service is a key project that needs Welsh Government funding to continue its core services, it would be a sore loss if this valuable service ceased to exist for both young people and professionals across Wales

I have enclosed the Executive Summary of our business case that we have submitted to the Welsh Government.

We look forward to your committee on 14th July.

Many thanks and best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. de Lacy', followed by a long, sweeping horizontal flourish that ends in a small hook.

Elen de Lacy
Chief Executive, ASH Wales Cymru

ash wales
cymru

action on smoking and health

FUNDING PROPOSAL: THE FILTER WALES
JUNE 2015



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document outlines ASH Wales Cymru's business case to the Welsh Government to support the work of The Filter service until 2017. ASH Wales Cymru has developed The Filter to fill a gap in existing smoking cessation services and to complement school-based prevention initiatives that are ongoing in Wales. Through the project, ASH Wales Cymru has developed strong and extensive links with community-based organisations and The Filter service is valued by both professionals and young people across Wales.

The Filter Wales

In 2012, ASH Wales Cymru received three-years of funding from Big Lottery to develop an all-Wales Smoking Cessation and Prevention Service – The Filter. The project has developed significantly over this period and includes a dedicated bi-lingual youth information website, social media channels, training for professionals, and youth prevention and cessation workshops. This unique project engages with young people aged 11-25 in the most deprived areas of Wales, where adult smoking prevalence is at its highest. The service places itself in out-of-school settings including in Further Education settings, youth clubs and Pupil Referral Units - complementing existing school-based interventions. The project has developed according to the needs of young people and youth provisions across Wales. Funding for this project finishes in October 2015.

There is no other service of this kind in the UK. In Wales, stop-smoking services are geared towards adults and prevention work is limited to school-based activities. Over the course of the project, The Filter team has worked with over 5,500 young people face-to-face at more than 250 sessions across Wales. Over 800 professionals have been trained and The Filter website has had over 45,000 unique visitors.

A small scale independent evaluation of The Filter Project led by Cardiff University concluded that all three strands of the Filter service were feasible, flexible and adaptable to deliver. The face-to-face training for professionals and workshops for young people were well received, and the online health promotion resources had success in securing engagement. The researchers identified that young people who are not engaged with education and more likely to smoke, are less likely to listen to one off workshops in school settings, offering one-directional information. They are more likely to engage in informal, flexible, fun activities but there are no engagement programmes other than the Filter in Wales which offer this.

To evaluate this complex intervention, DECIPHer at Cardiff University are currently carrying out a Stage II NIHR-funded feasibility study and process evaluation of the

Filter in Further Education settings. This will be completed in autumn 2015. If the Welsh Government is able to provide continued funding for The Filter service, it is highly likely that this research will progress to a full randomised-controlled trial in 30 Further Education settings in Wales. This trial will therefore assess the effectiveness of The Filter intervention. An evaluation of this kind is essential to provide youth-led solutions to the challenges of youth smoking in Wales.

The problem

The equivalent of a classroom full of young people start smoking every day in Wales; but in the period 1st April 2014 – 31st March 2015, only 66 young people aged under 18 were treated by Stop Smoking Wales compared to 6,544 adults aged 18-60+. We know that the younger the age of uptake of smoking, the greater the harm as early uptake is associated with subsequent heavier smoking, higher levels of dependency and a lower chance of quitting. The highest rates of smoking prevalence and smoking-attributable mortality can be found in the most deprived areas of Wales.

The Welsh Government's Tobacco Control Action Plan for Wales, published in 2012, has as its central aim to drive down adult smoking prevalence levels to 16% by 2020. To achieve this ambitious target, youth uptake of smoking must be reduced alongside reducing smoking prevalence levels and tackling health inequalities. Targeting youth smoking cessation and prevention services to areas of greatest need is essential if we are going to ensure a future healthy and smokefree population for Wales.

Funding proposal

ASH Wales Cymru is seeking funding over the next 2½ years from the Welsh Government to continue this much needed and successful service. There is currently a gap in provision in Wales for both prevention interventions in out-of-school and Further Education settings; and also for a dedicated youth cessation service. There is no other service in Wales that meets the needs of young people and seeks to engage with them in relevant ways, The Filter fills this gap.

The Filter service will offer three strands:

1. Tobacco prevention and cessation workshops
2. Youth smoking cessation support
3. Training for professionals.

These three strands will be backed up by online support through The Filter's youth dedicated website and social media channels. The project will run throughout 22 local authorities across Wales; however its main focus will be to target areas of

greatest need, where adult smoking rates are at their highest. ASH Wales will engage with more than 1700 young people per annum face-to-face, and reach many more via our online services.

The total cost of the intervention over the 2½ year period will be £342,220. ASH Wales Cymru has developed clear objectives and outcomes for each strand of the service. We will implement robust evaluation mechanisms to measure the effectiveness of the current intervention in reaching young people, and professionals across Wales. It is also anticipated that a definitive trial in Further Education settings will run alongside our internal evaluation.

Exit strategy

ASH Wales Cymru is in the process developing and implementing a fundraising strategy to ensure a more sustainable funding base for The Filter. We have already received funding via an EU grant and we are also promoting the service across the UK on a commissioning basis. These areas of work however take time to build and implement. It is essential that the core costs of the project are funded over the next 2½ years to allow ASH Wales Cymru to sustain the project into the future.

Conclusion

The Filter provides an invaluable and unique service combining prevention work, cessation support, youth work, training and digital expertise. The Filter offers face-to-face and online services that engage young people in relevant ways, to tackle the extremely damaging public health challenge of smoking in our communities in Wales.

If the Welsh Government is not able to provide funding for this unique service, then work with more than 1700 young people and 200 professionals a year will be lost alongside our well-established community networks. Our harder to reach young people in Wales will no longer have a service which meets their needs.

Agenda Item 3.2

P-04-634 End Exclusion in Schools for Children with No Religion

Petition wording:

This petition seeks the support of the Minister for Education and Skills to provide a non-discriminatory education for children of no organised religion in Wales.

This petition has been prompted after personal experience sending my own child to an excellent community primary school in Pontypridd. This school has fantastically supportive teachers and high quality teaching. However, like all community primaries in Wales, it is legally obliged to provide sessions of collective worship and occasionally exceeds its legal obligations under the law by bringing worship into the classroom, the lunch hall and school trips (to places like the Creationist Zoo, Noah's Ark Farm (see existing petition under consideration here:

<http://www.senedd.assembly.wales/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?Ild=10925>).

In our instance parents have never been consulted on whether we wish our child taught a religion as truth, which we do not. Once I heard of the trip to Noah's Ark Zoo in particular, I called the headmaster who told me that I had the option to exclude my child from organised school activities, which I do not wish to as it would damage and reduce my daughter's role in the school community and generally discriminate against her on the basis of religion.

Afterwards, I searched for a nearby school to which I could send my daughter as an alternative and found that not only was there no option locally but, in fact, none in the whole of Wales. I was genuinely shocked to find that this legal imposition meant that there was no school in the country where my daughter could partake as an equal in school activities. In speaking to a number of other parents in the school, I found sufficient support among the religious and non-religious to put forward this petition.

The petitioner does not seek a petition to end religious practice in schools but to ask the Education Minister to ensure a viable, non-discriminatory education is accessible for children of no organised religion.

Petition raised by: Richard Martin

Date petition first considered by Committee: 14 July 2015

Number of signatures: 37 Online signatures



Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-634
Ein cyf/Our ref HL/00815/15

William Powell AM
Chair - Petitions Committee

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

12 May 2015

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter of 30 April on behalf of the Petitions Committee seeking my views on the ability for parents to access a secular education for their children.

I currently have no plans to change the legal status of collective worship in schools nor do I plan to allow the introduction of completely non religious state schools.

Religious education in the twenty-first century encourages pupils to explore a range of philosophical, theological, ethical, and spiritual questions in a reflective, analytical, balanced way that stimulates questioning and debate. It also focuses on understanding humanity's quest for meaning, the positive aspects of multi-faith/multicultural understanding and pupils' own understanding and responses to life and religion. Parents continue to have the legal right to withdraw their children from Religious Education if they wish.

Presently, the Education Reform Act 1988, the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 and the Welsh Office Circular 10/94 set out the legal requirements for collective worship in schools in Wales. These requirements apply to pupils in maintained schools other than special schools. The requirements do not apply to colleges of further education or to nursery schools or nursery classes in infant or primary schools.

The law states that most acts of collective worship in each term should be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian nature', the aim of collective worship in schools is described in Welsh Office Circular 10/94 as providing 'the opportunity for pupils to worship God, to consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs as well as giving children time to reflect'.

However, those leading collective worship in schools should be sensitive to the range of beliefs and non-beliefs held by pupils in the school. Collective worship should therefore give pupils the opportunity to worship without encouraging them to do something that is against the teachings of their religion or beliefs.

A parent can request that their child is excused from collective worship and schools must agree to such requests in all circumstances. Parents do not have to give reasons. The school may, in agreement with parents, provide alternative arrangements for worship for one or more pupils that are excused, but is not obliged to do so.

On 25 February I welcomed the publication of Professor Graham Donaldson's Successful Futures Report, which looked at the development of new curriculum and assessment arrangements for Wales. In his report, Professor Donaldson recommended that Religious Education should continue to be a statutory part of the curriculum.

There is currently a "Great Debate" on Professor Donaldson's recommendations and while this initial phase will close on 8 May, there will be opportunities for interested parties to feed in the development of the new curriculum as work progresses.

Yours sincerely



Huw Lewis AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau
Minister for Education and Skills



William Powell AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales

Your Ref: P-04-634

8 July 2015

Dear Mr Powell,

Many thanks for your recent correspondence with Minister for Education and Skills with regard to the online petition I opened some months ago. Although I have not seen a copy of your correspondence, I have read the Minister's response and would like to submit the following responses. Before doing so, I would like to express my gratitude to the committee for considering my petition despite its relatively low signatory count. The petitions system is a commendable system for groups and individuals to express their democratic voice and plays a valuable role in the democratic landscape here in Wales.

I am aware that this petition addresses a sensitive area where many people, apparently including the Minister, have tread a well-worn path in debates on certain issues. I would like to stress that this petition comes not from an ideologue seeking the eradication of religion from state schools but from a secular parent who wishes their child to have an inclusive, high quality, state education where their absence of religion should not be an impediment. Neither should they (as an impressionable child) have to conform to a school's religious practices in order to play a full role in the school community.

In paragraph 3, the Minister launches a staunch defence of Religious Education in schools. This was not referred to in the original petition because I, like all parents, want our children to be educated fully about this world we share. An understanding of the role religion plays in societies around us is crucial to understanding them - for example the geopolitics of the Middle East - and I think secular children as well as children of faith value this equally. I think this may be an echo of previous debates the Minister has had in this area and I would discourage further consideration of this aspect of the Minister's response.

My experience with my daughter's school is brought sharply in to focus by paragraph 6 of the Minister's response. My deepest concerns relate to the introduction of religious practice as 'de rigeur' parts of school life (Christian prayer in classes, saying thanks to God before meals, teaching of Bible stories as truth). As my daughter, like most children, is keen to learn and follow the guidance of her teachers, she adopted these practices as part of daily life. It was her bringing these practices into our secular household that initially triggered my exploration of these issues with the school.

In paragraph 6, the Minister says:

"...those leading collective worship in schools should be sensitive to the range of beliefs and non-beliefs held by pupils in the school."

I think this raises a very interesting question. How do those who lead collective worship become aware of the range of beliefs and non-beliefs held by pupils in the school? Because of the age of

their pupils, it surely can't be from the children themselves. As parents, we are asked many questions about our child but religious activity is not one of them so the teachers cannot know from the parents. When my partner and I sent our daughter to school, we did so with the naiveté that we would be asked if the school was to do any religious activity, which obviously is not the case.

As a parent, I would strongly recommend that community schools should ask parents about religious preferences upon their child's registration. This would be one simple additional question which would protect the values of religious and non-religious families. It seems, at least, like good manners.

The Minister's position on collective worship is unambiguous, with "no plans" for change. However, in paragraph 7 he highlights one of the key discriminating elements of the current statute and legislation in this area.

He writes:

"The school may, in agreement with parents, provide alternative arrangements for worship for one or more pupils that are excused, but is not obliged to do so"

I would urge the committee to consider replacing religion with another aspect of equality legislation in this context. Imagine, for example, that this same attitude was applied to those with a physical disability thus:

"The school may, in agreement with parents, provide alternative access arrangements for one or more pupils that have mobility issues, but is not obliged to do so."

I think that instantly highlights that the tone of this guidance is incorrect and values the beliefs (or non-beliefs) of those who do not wish to participate in collective worship as less valuable or valid than those that do. I would encourage those responsible for this advice to reconsider its tone.

I would also ask for the Minister to consider the negative impact of exclusion from school's mandatory collective worship sessions may have on a child (potentially as young as 4 or 5). If he were to think about the emotional impact of this upon a child's development over time - on the basis of their non-belief - it asks serious questions about whether it ought be the only option for secular parents to take.

To distill the thoughts of a number of fellow parents, I would encourage the Minister to consider school environments as belief 'neutral' spaces. I don't think many would campaign for the 'completely non religious state schools' the Minister quite clearly opposes but I think many would agree that state schools should not demonstrate preference (or prejudice) about belief. Child of belief should be allowed and encouraged to practice their beliefs and those from secular backgrounds should be allowed to participate fully in school life without being imprinted by religious practice from the school.

I would refer the Minister to consider that, according to the ONS data, a quarter of the population have no formal religion and that Wales is the least religious part of England and Wales.

I hope that this response has been helpful and will facilitate further debate and progress in discussing this subject.

Kind regards,

Richard Martin

P-04-644 The Future of Further Education

Petition wording:

We note the decision of the Welsh government to cut Further Education funding by £26m for the year 2015/16 and recognise that the 8% cut in the Welsh budget imposed by Westminster, has created financial challenges for Wales. However we fail to understand the decisions of Welsh Government to then allocate money from Westminster in a way that will cause great hardship to a key member of the 'Education Family' in Wales. Colleges have dealt admirably with several years of successive funding cuts and we do not see how they can continue to deliver the remit expected of them by Welsh government. We also note the policy of the Welsh Government to increase reliance on employer contributions to fund employee training, but are not convinced that this will be sufficient to plug the level of Government underfunding. In addition the 50% slash in funding to part time courses will decimate further education provision leaving thousands of adults without access to opportunities to improve their education or to retrain. It will also put hundreds of FE jobs at risk. Further education colleges in Wales have co-operated with Welsh Government over previous funding cuts and a series of mergers, but are now at breaking point. We call upon the Welsh Government not to implement these cuts and to invest properly in lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Additional information

UCU Wales are concerned that:

- * Employers will be unwilling or unable to plug the gap left by the withdrawal of Welsh Government funding.
- * Adults will be restricted to training that is deemed suitable by employers.
- * Adults in low paid, unsatisfactory jobs will be unable to access the education they need to improve their employment opportunities elsewhere.

* Cuts in funding will severely limit choices available to adults. *
Opportunities to improve the life chances of many adults and their families will be removed, which in terms of tackling poverty and improving the economy of Wales, is counterproductive.

* The quality of remaining provision will be reduced as there will be fewer staff, bigger class sizes and less time to teach the courses.

Petition raised by: UCU Wales

Date petition first considered by Committee: 16 June 2015

Number of signatures: 1,861 Online signatures

Julie James AC / AM
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Sgiliau a Thechnoleg
Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-644
Ein cyf/Our ref JJ/00420/15

William Powell AM
Assembly Member for Mid & West Wales
Chair - Petitions Committee

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

17 June 2015

Dear William

Thank you for your letter of 5 June to Huw Lewis AM regarding the petition you have received from UCU Wales about The Future of Further Education. As this falls within my portfolio I am replying to the concerns that have been raised

I appreciate that members of UCU Wales are very concerned about the cuts to the Further Education (FE) budget. From my own discussions with UCU over recent months, I am well aware of the difficulties the funding rationalisation has had on individuals and institutions in the sector. I can assure you that there is not a single person working in Welsh Government who would choose to make these cuts if they didn't have to, however, this, unfortunately, is the reality of the situation we find ourselves in.

As mentioned by UCU, the cuts imposed on Wales by the government at Westminster mean that the Welsh Government's budget is around 8% lower in real terms than it was in 2010/11. We have been clear with everyone working in every public service in Wales about the financial challenges we face.

The decisions made on budget are guided by the priorities we were elected on in 2011. For example, we said we would protect school spending by 1% above the Welsh block and we have done this by ensuring an additional £100m has been made available for Welsh schools since the election. We said that we would invest in our NHS and that is why we will invest an additional £500m in the Welsh NHS over the next two years. These priorities for funding have necessitated difficult decisions in other areas of the Welsh Government's budget; and I acknowledge the significant difficulties this has caused FE.

The Post-16 FE budget has had to be reduced by £14 million and, as a consequence, part time provision delivered in Further Education has been the hardest hit; with a 50 per cent reduction in funding. We have striven to protect learners as much as possible, and have protected provision for our 16-19 year olds. As we work through these difficult times, it is more important than ever that we focus not just on the resources that are available, but also how we use them to best effect to achieve the best outcomes for young people.

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The Welsh Government has statutory duties, one of which gives primacy to the educational facilities made available for learners aged 16-18. Therefore, the funding cuts have been designed to protect these learners as much as possible. We have also protected our most vulnerable learners, so Adult Basic Education (ABE), English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and discrete provision for learners with moderate or profound learning difficulties has not been subject to the 50 per cent cut.

My officials are working closely with the post -16 sector to evaluate options and to minimise the impact of any reductions on learning. Officials and colleges have worked together, via a Welsh Government convened working group, to look to develop proposals to minimise the impact of these reductions, which is a good example of how the FE sector and Welsh Government can work together to ensure we continue to offer first class learning opportunities to Welsh learners.

We have worked hard to protect provision for those aged 16-18. In fact, we have gone beyond our statutory duty and protected provision for those aged 19. In addition, we have been able to maintain funding for Traineeships, and are continuing to fund Apprenticeships for those aged 16-24 as well as all-age Higher Level Apprenticeships. We fought hard in the recent budget settlement to mitigate some of these cuts and we secured an additional £5m funding for additional apprenticeships in 2015-16 and 2016-17. Looking ahead, the Policy Statement on Skills is designed to prioritise funding for learners aged 16-24 as well as ensuring continued support for all-age Higher Apprenticeships. Part of this is a recognition that we simply cannot continue with a situation where the Government is the sole source of funding for skills training.

The Skills Strategy we have put in place is focused on getting employers to make a greater investment in the training of their workforce through co-investment. I agree that this long-term challenge requires cultural change, but is something which must be tackled if we are to achieve our key goal of a financially sustainable skills system in Wales over the next decade.

Our new *Flexible Skills Programme* will receive £3.9 million to support the skills and employment needs of companies that play a strategic role in the economy. It is estimated that 60 companies will receive funding, and benefit 3,200 individuals.

The development of projects to deliver essential skills support to employed and unemployed adults in Wales is well underway. Officials are now working with partners in the Further Education Sector to continue the development of regional skills projects to incorporate workplace essential skills activity and to explore potential match funding arrangements. Officials are also progressing an extension to the Work Ready programme offering essential skills and employability support to unemployed adults to 31 March 2016. This will enable officials to further develop the Skills for Employment Wales programme listed above, in particular to ensure the new programme takes into account the outcomes of current discussions regarding the future delivery and administration of the UK Government's Work Programme.

In parallel with the arrangements to address lower level skills for employed adults, officials are also working with the FEI sector to incorporate higher level skills activity within the regional skills projects currently being developed. These arrangements will build on existing developments throughout 2014-15 and 2015-16 as part of the Skills Priorities Programme (SPP) aiming to address the growing shortage of highly skilled individuals across Wales. SPP has two main aims: 1) to further extend the development and delivery of industry relevant higher level skills provision; and 2) to support a shift towards more co-invested

skills delivery. Whilst some progress has been made through initial pilot activity in 2014/15, additional investment is needed to further support and incentivise the sector to make this shift. From April 2016, it is intended that this activity will be incorporated within the three FE-led regional skills ESF projects and it is envisaged that DfES will allocate match funding to these projects, with stringent criteria attached, for delivery of higher level skills activity in line with regional employer demand. Officials are also working with these regional skills projects to explore options for common branding. Clearly, we will continue to provide support where we can, but we need to see employers increasing their level of investment.

Against the backdrop of reducing public sector budgets that I have outlined, Welsh Government is working with Regional Skills Partnerships to develop the robust evidence base to prioritise employer skills needs in the three regions linked to key investment priorities/transformational projects.

Regionally focused skills demand and supply assessments, due at the end of September 2015, will:

- Influence where future Department for Education and Skills (DfES) investment should be focused
- Act as a mechanism for regional partners to steer and prioritise their own budgets to support economically focused regionally important priorities.

I have tasked each individual college to look for opportunities for establishing diverse income streams. There are some very good examples in the sector where a college has established a business development team to generate privately funded income through engagement with local businesses to ensure courses meet employer and student need. Being responsive to employers' needs and building on the good practice is more important than ever.

We do value adult education, but we are in the position of having to prioritise where our funds are spent. We have protected our young people from the worst of the cuts we have had to endure from Westminster; and we will continue doing this over the next few years. We also remain committed to FE and look forward to working with colleges in the coming months and years to achieve the best outcomes for learners.

Our aim over the next few years is to help create a sustainable funding framework for Further Education in Wales that can allow the sector to grow and prosper. We are looking carefully at how we can strengthen the relationships between FE Colleges and our schools and universities so we have the seamless, diverse and world class system of Welsh education that can cater for all learners at all levels, as outlined in our Qualified for Life Strategy.

The views of UCU and other stakeholders will be central to realising that vision and so I want to put on record my thanks for the contribution they have made.

Yours sincerely



Julie James AC / AM

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Sgiliau a Thechnoleg
Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology

William Powell AM
Chair – Petitions Committee

c/o Kayleigh.Driscoll@assembly.wales

23rd June 2015

Dear William,

In light of the correspondence from Julie James AM to yourself, dated 17th June 2015, UCU Wales would like to offer the following response.

The Minister clearly sets out the aims of the Welsh Government with regard to Further Education in Wales, however from our point of view this only serves to highlight the concerns raised by our petition.

We are already aware of the intention to rely on increased employer investment in training and yet, as the Minister's letter clearly states, "this is a long term challenge" and although "some progress has been made" further support is needed to "incentivise the sector".

The colleges are at breaking point now. They do not have the luxury of being able to wait and see what happens over the next decade. This academic year alone, there have been at least 800 voluntary redundancies across the FE sector; this is likely to be the tip of the iceberg. We have recently been made aware that the colleges are now to expect further cuts to the 2015/16 budget, in addition to those that we were aware of at the outset of this petition. The gravity of the situation is outlined in the following note that we have received from one of the college principals:

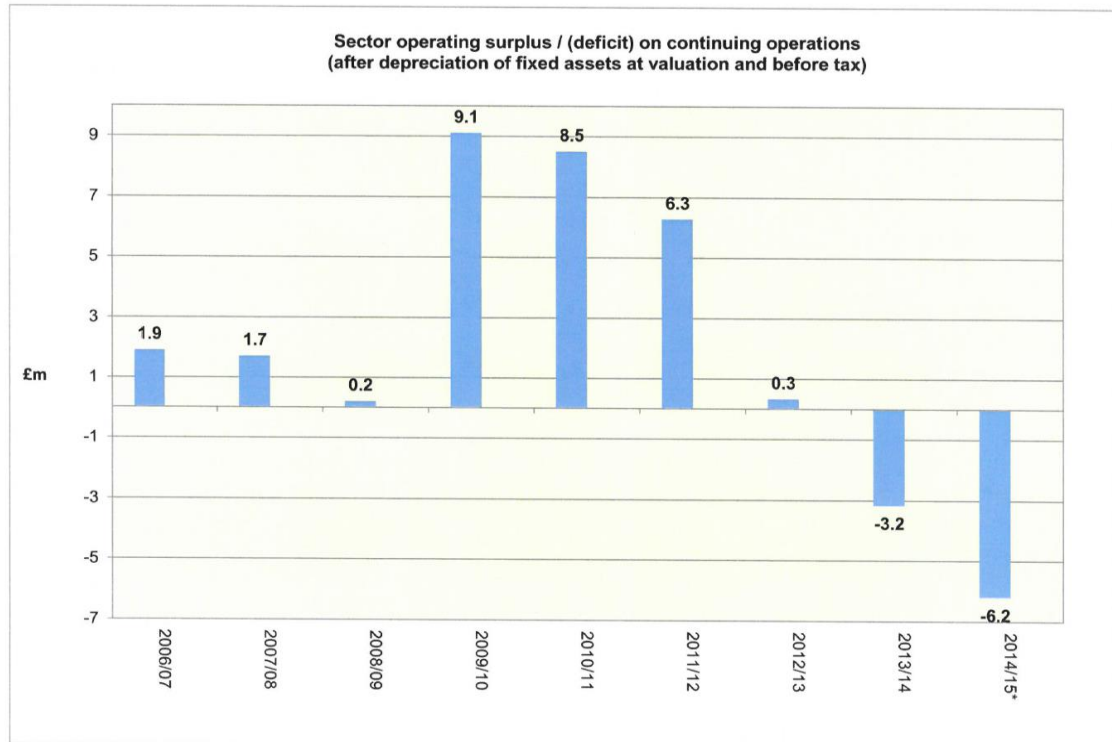
"... this week we have received instruction in terms of our financial planning for 2015/16, which tells us that we should include a range of forecasts that show further cuts for 2015/16 ie the year now beginning in 1^{1/2} months' time- from 0% up to 5%. For information a 5% cut would mean a further reduction of £1.25 million for this College.

At the same time all Principals and Chairs of Governors have been invited to meet the Deputy Minister on the 6th July for a meeting which DfES have called "Raising Resilience in Further Education". This doesn't sound good – and I am working with

Colegau Cymru to ensure that representations are made now that “enough is enough” and that “FE is already taken its fair share of reductions”.

The graph below represents the overall FE sector’s surpluses/deficits in recent years (with the most recent estimate for 2014/15) showing the picture in recent years.

Mid year return



We fail to see how the FE sector can seriously be expected to deliver the remit required of it, at a level that will offer “first class learning opportunities”, under the proposed funding arrangements. Further funding cuts will inevitably lead to compulsory redundancies, further course cuts, reduction in learner choice and an overburdened workforce that cannot deliver the quality of service that the people of Wales deserve.

The Minister repeatedly states that provision is being protected for those learners up to the age of 19 years, but not for those aged 20 or above, unless they are basic skills or employer approved and funded training.

We note that the Minister refers to offering first class learning opportunities to Welsh learners, but not to ‘all’ Welsh learners, which again highlights our concern that opportunities to access life changing learning experiences, will be severely limited (if available at all) for thousands of adults in Wales.

We are aware that the Welsh Government are continuing to fund apprenticeships, however we are concerned that the quality of a number of apprenticeship schemes are not

of a particularly high quality; an issue that is recognized by the Welsh Government, as evidenced in their recent consultation on apprenticeship provision¹. We are unclear as to how the Welsh Government can expect to support the development of high quality apprenticeships, if they do not have adequate funding for qualified and experienced staff or for appropriate resources.

Further we note the investment in the new flexible skills programme, but question why it is that on the one hand the Government are calling for employers to invest more money into training, but on the other hand are providing them with £3.9 to support their skills and employment needs? We would like to know what safeguards there are to ensure that this money will benefit the 3,200 individuals it is aimed at and how?

We would suggest that instead of scattering and diluting available funding, it would be preferable to pool resources and adequately fund FE colleges, to allow them to provide high quality, standardised courses, leading to recognised and portable qualifications that will provide employers with a ready pool of employees.

We hear what is being said with regard to having no choice but to implement the decisions that have been made, but we are not convinced by this plea. Those that have made the choices to disproportionately cut the funding to the FE sector, have the power to review those choices. We would like to see greater consideration of the impact and perhaps, unintended consequences of the decision to so savagely cut, not just the funding, but the route out of poverty and low paid employment for thousands of Welsh citizens, particularly women.

The content of the letter from the Minister, clearly indicates to us that the Welsh Government does not "value adult education", further it does not address any of the concerns that have been highlighted in our petition; if anything, it confirms our fears for the future of lifelong learning.

Please find attached UCU documents, outlining our concerns and highlighting the case for the need for a specific policy for FE in Wales. We are keen to work with the current and any future government in Wales to ensure that we can build and maintain a truly first class education system which is inclusive of everyone.

Yours sincerely



Lisa Edwards
Policy and Communications Officer
UCU Wales

¹ <http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/consultation/150129-apprenticeship-model-consultation-en.pdf>

Wales needs a policy for Further Education

UCU Commentary

The University and College Union (UCU) is the largest post 16 education trade union in the UK. As part of this wider organisation, UCU Wales represents over 7,000 lecturers in Further and Higher Education in Wales.

We campaign for greater public investment in the post 16 education sector, as well fair pay and decent working conditions for our members.

Further and Higher education is vital for individual development, social mobility and a successful economy. Learning benefits people of all ages in terms of employability, wellbeing, personal development and self-confidence.

Colleges and universities are key economic contributors, both as local employers and as providers of training and education for the workforce on which local and Welsh economies depend.

To realise its full potential to society, education and training must be adequately funded and fully accessible. Policy should be based on the premise that Schools, Further Education providers and Universities *collectively* help to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty by providing both opportunities for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and a 'second chance' for older people to help them exit low pay.

Policy for Further Education

UCU Wales call for there to be a commitment to developing a robust policy for further education. Whilst we recognise the commitment and desire to fund other areas of the education sector to improve quality, tackle poverty and meet employer demands, this current the lack of policy for the Further Education sector is creating a black hole in which poverty survives.

Reasons for developing an FE policy in Wales.

To provide second/third chance learning

Traditionally, further education has provided second chance opportunities to adults who for whatever reason, did not achieve their potential at school. There are many bright, but late developers, who without further education, would not be making the positive contribution to Wales that they are now. The ability to gain qualifications for life does not stop at 19 years old. Opportunities to access a wide range of qualifications, at differing levels will become increasingly important as the working population ages, resulting in perhaps several career changes throughout

working life. Supporting older people to maintain and enhance their potential value to society will be of increasing significance to policy development of the future.

- **To help tackle poverty**

Much emphasis has been placed on early years intervention and improving attainment of pupils eligible for free school meals. However evidence of the success of such intervention is patchy and points toward the effects of early intervention programmes being short lived and not sufficient to close the attainment gap for disadvantaged children. Low educational attainment of parents, affects their children's development and progress at school. Further Education supports an approach to family learning that enables all family members to enhance their learning and can support whole families that are vulnerable to poverty.

- **To help reduce reliance on welfare**

Poverty is caused by low paid work as well as unemployment. Enabling more working people to gain access to qualifications, which will assist them out of in-work poverty, should take equal priority. We recognise the desire for employers to provide funding for the 'up-skilling' for their employees and agree that they should take responsibility for financing the acquisition of skills and qualifications that will directly benefit their business. However, this is likely to leave many employees 'trapped', where the qualifications they need to change jobs to gain better pay and therefore reduce the need for 'in-work' benefits, are not funded by the employer and are too costly to fund themselves.

- **Promoting equality, social mobility and community cohesion.**

Poverty reduces opportunities and makes social mobility more difficult. Poverty is also associated with poor health and worklessness that can separate people from mainstream society. Current proposals to reduce the budget for part time courses by 50%, is likely to have disproportionate effect on women. In 2012-13 58% of all unique part time enrolments in FE were women and 59% of part time learners over 19, were women domiciled in deprived areas.

- **To assist in delivering high quality apprenticeships**

We support moves to improve the quality and status of apprenticeship programmes in Wales and welcome the desire to create parity between the value of vocational and academic qualifications. Further education, with its teams of highly skilled and qualified vocational staff, is uniquely placed to provide the off-site training and education required to help realise this ambition.

- **To assist the delivery of HE in FE**

In line with the widening access agenda, we recognise the need for the growth of the provision of accessible, higher level qualifications. Investment in further education will be key to this vision, in order to enable staff in FE colleges access to appropriate CPD and manageable workloads that allow them to deliver the quality of provision expected at higher levels.

- **To ensure appropriate continuous professional development.**

In order for further education to recruit and retain highly motivated and qualified 'dual professionals', to deliver the quality of teaching and learning required. Policy development needs to focus on a framework that sets out the quality and level of CPD required. This should be a practitioner led approach, based on pedagogic principles and professional need, similar to the New Deal being developed for teachers in schools, but for FE it must contain access to appropriate industrial updates and development.

- **To assist the implementation of the Programme for Government**

In addition to the strands of the Programme for Government already touched upon a clear policy for the education sector would assist in the efficiency and co-ordination of a wide range of initiatives. There is an implied reliance on the FE sector to support programmes such as Jobs Growth Wales, Basic Skills development, Welsh Language, changes to the provision for Addition Learning Needs and no doubt, to implement some of the recommendations from the Donaldson review of the Curriculum. It is clear that the sector is seen as having an important part to play in many areas of Welsh life and as such is worthy of robust policy to define and protect its role in the collective provision of lifelong learning for everyone.

The role of further education is far more than a vocational extension of 6th Form provision. It is a lifeline for many adults to improved health and wellbeing as well as enhanced employment opportunities. It can be a tool for addressing economic and political needs, but it also empowers individuals to shape their own destiny.

If we are to develop a vibrant economy in Wales, that will be ready to tackle the unknown challenges ahead, we need investment in a high quality, lifelong education at all levels. We need a system that can prepare and support all citizens through the challenges that each life stage brings, so that we can nurture a creative and flexible workforce.

Developing a policy for the future of the Further Education Sector in Wales

**6th Form supplement or FE
for everyone?**

Wales needs a policy for Further Education

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Colleges and universities are key economic contributors, both as local employers and as providers of training and education for the workforce on which local and Welsh economies depend.

To realise its full potential to society, education and training must be adequately funded and fully accessible. Policy should be based on the premise that Schools, Further Education providers and Universities *collectively* help to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty by providing both opportunities for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and a 'second chance' for older people to help them exit low pay.

Policy for Further Education

UCU Wales call for there to be a commitment to developing a robust policy for further education. Whilst we recognise the commitment and desire to fund other areas of the education sector to improve quality, tackle poverty and meet employer demands, this current the lack of policy for the Further Education Sector is creating a black hole in which poverty thrives.

This paper sets out reasons for the need to develop a distinct policy for further education in Wales.

To provide second and subsequent learning chances

Traditionally, further education has provided second chance opportunities to adults who for whatever reason, did not achieve their potential at school. There are many bright, but late developers, who without further education, would not be making the positive contribution to Wales that they are now. The ability to gain qualifications for life does not stop at 19 years old. Opportunities to access a wide range of qualifications, at differing levels will become increasingly important as the working population ages, resulting in perhaps several career changes throughout working life. Supporting older people to maintain and enhance their potential value to society will be of increasing significance to policy development of the future.

- **To help tackle poverty**

Much emphasis has been placed on early years intervention and improving attainment of pupils eligible for free school meals. However evidence of the success of such intervention is patchy and points toward the effects of early intervention programmes being short lived and not sufficient to close the long-term attainment gap for disadvantaged children. Low educational attainment of parents, affects their children's development and progress at school. Further Education supports an approach to family learning that enables all family members to enhance their learning and can support whole families who are vulnerable to poverty.

- **To help reduce reliance on welfare**

Poverty is caused by low paid work as well as unemployment. Enabling more working people to gain access to qualifications, which will assist them out of in-work poverty, should take equal priority. We recognise the desire for employers to provide funding for the 'up-skilling' for their employees and agree that they should take responsibility for financing the acquisition of skills and qualifications that will directly benefit their business. However, this is likely to leave many employees 'trapped', where the qualifications they need to change jobs to gain better pay and therefore reduce the need for 'in-work' benefits, are not funded by the employer and are too costly to fund themselves.

- **Promoting equality, social mobility and community cohesion.**

Poverty reduces opportunities and makes social mobility more difficult. Poverty is also associated with poor health and worklessness, which can separate people from mainstream society. Current proposals to reduce the budget for part time courses by 50%, is likely to have disproportionate effect on women. In 2012-13 58% of all unique part time enrolments in FE were women and 59% of part time learners over 19, were women domiciled in deprived areas.

- **To assist in delivering high quality apprenticeships**

We support moves to improve the quality and status of apprenticeship programmes in Wales and welcome the desire to create parity between the value of vocational and academic qualifications. Further education, with its teams of highly skilled and qualified vocational staff, is uniquely placed to provide the off-site training and education required to help realise this ambition.

- **To assist the delivery of HE in FE**

In line with the widening access agenda, we recognise the need for the growth of the provision of accessible, higher level qualifications. Investment in further education will be key to this vision, in order to enable staff in FE colleges access to appropriate CPD and

manageable workloads, that allow them to deliver the quality of provision expected at higher levels.

- **To ensure appropriate continuous professional development.**

In order for further education to recruit and retain highly motivated and qualified 'dual professionals', to deliver the quality of teaching and learning required. Policy development needs to focus on a framework that sets out the quality and level of CPD required. This should be a practitioner led approach, based on pedagogic principles and professional need, similar to the New Deal being developed for teachers in schools. However, for FE it must contain access to appropriate industrial updates and development.

- **To assist the implementation of the Programme for Government**

In addition to the strands of the Programme for Government already touched upon, a clear policy for the further education sector would assist in the efficiency and co-ordination of a wide range of initiatives. There is an implied reliance on the FE sector to support programmes such as Jobs Growth Wales, Basic Skills development, Welsh Language, changes to the provision for Addition Learning Needs and no doubt, to implement some of the recommendations from the Donaldson review of the Curriculum. It is clear that the sector is seen as having an important part to play in many areas of Welsh life and as such is worthy of robust policy to define and protect its role in the collective provision of lifelong learning for everyone.

The role of further education is far more than a vocational extension of 6th Form provision. It is a lifeline for many adults to improved health and wellbeing, as well as enhanced employment opportunities. It can be a tool for addressing economic and political needs, but it also empowers individuals to shape their own destiny.

If we are to develop a vibrant economy in Wales, that will be ready to tackle the unknown challenges ahead, we need investment in a high quality, lifelong education at all levels. We need a system that can prepare and support all citizens through the challenges that each life stage brings, so that we can nurture creative and cohesive communities and flexible workforce.

Promoting equality, social mobility, community cohesion and tackling poverty.

Further education provides second chance opportunities to adults who, for whatever reason, did not achieve their potential at school. There are many bright, but late developers, who without further education, would not be making the positive contribution to Wales that they are now. The ability to gain qualifications for life does not stop at 19 years old. Opportunities to access a wide range of qualifications, at differing levels will become increasingly important as the working population ages, resulting in perhaps several career changes throughout working life. Supporting older people to maintain and enhance their potential value to society will be of increasing significance to policy development of the future.

The latest statistics available,¹ show that in 2012-13, there were 156,335 unique enrolments, on Further Education programmes. 67% of these were people over the age of 19 years; a clear indication that there is demand for education for adults, outside of compulsory schooling and higher education and yet there is no clear policy in Wales for the direction of this valuable service. Current policy, on the whole, is aimed at the education and training of those aged 19 and under, as illustrated by the publication of the Welsh government's "Qualified for Life" document in October 2014. We would argue that this is at the peril of ignoring the needs of the 105,015 adults over the age of 19 who enrolled in FE in 2012-13. The number of enrolments of those over the age of 19, appears to make a nonsense of the current emphasis for Further Education provision to be focussed on full time programmes of learning for those up to 19 years. We are concerned that we risk of losing a vital pool of untapped Welsh talent if there is no policy to safeguard the provision of Further Education for adults.

Further to this the majority of unique enrolments to part time courses was 69%. 87% of whom were over 19 and 58% of the total number of part time enrolments were female. The current proposals to cut the budget for part time provision in Further education will therefore have a disproportionate effect on women. Contrary to the Government of Wales Act (2006), equality of opportunity for all people will fail to be secured, with current budget arrangements.

Poverty reduces opportunities and makes social mobility more difficult. Poverty is also associated with poor health and worklessness, which can separate people from mainstream society. In 2012- 13 59% of part time learners over 19, were women domiciled in deprived areas. In terms of the Welsh Government 'Tackling Poverty' agenda, this is an indication of the vital contribution that Further Education makes.

There has been much emphasis on the reduction of NEETS, those not in employment, education or training. The Welsh Government's Youth Guarantee, emphasises the needs of those aged 16-19, however the number of NEETs aged

¹ <https://stats.wales.gov.uk/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Post-16-Education-and-Training/Further-Education-and-Work-Based-Learning/Learners/Further-Education/UniqueLearnersEnrolledFurtherEducationInstitutions-by-Deprivation-Gender-Age>

19-24 is higher². At the end of 2013, 10.5% of 16-18 year olds were NEET and yet the figure for those aged 19-24 stood at 21.2%. Further Education could play an important role in assisting in the development of opportunities for NEETS, particularly the older age range, but this would require a policy for Further Education which distinguished its role from that of merely supplementary 6th form provision and reinforce the value of the FE sector as a unique provider of lifelong training and education for all.

Much emphasis has been placed on early years intervention and improving attainment of pupils eligible for free school meals. However evidence of the success of such intervention is patchy and points toward the effects of early intervention programmes being short lived and not sufficient to close the long-term attainment gap for disadvantaged children. Low educational attainment of parents, affects their children's development and progress at school. Further Education supports an approach to family learning that enables all family members to enhance their learning and can support whole families that are vulnerable to poverty.

"The benefits of learning to families matter because of the way that poverty can be passed on through the generations. Children and adults learning together, for example, can contribute to children's resilience and communication skills, and can help to reduce children's psychological and behavioural disorders. The acquisition of skills by parents can also help children's performance at school. Children's achievement in early life remains the best indicator of their living successful lives as adults. In this context, lifelong learning has an important contribution to make to reducing poverty in the long run."³

Therefore policies that do not address the need for access to lifelong learning and indeed contribute to their demise, are counterproductive to any attempt to reduce the impact of poverty on the educational attainment of young children.

The structure of our society is changing. More people are living longer. It is predicted that by 2020⁴ almost a third (32%) of the working age population and almost half (48%) the adult population, will be people aged 50. As retirement age continues to rise, working for longer will become an economic necessity. The Welsh Government Skills Implementation Plan focus is on securing a resilient and sustainable skills system for Wales and aims to ensure that employability policies consider the challenges faced by older people. However it is unclear how older people will access the education they need to remain competitive in the workplace, if they are unable to access further education. Welsh Government proposals for addressing the needs of training in the workforce are via the Co-investment framework⁵. However this fails to address the need for learning that is not directly related to an employer led agenda. Further to this evidence was identified in the Equality Impact Assessments for the Programme of Wales, which suggested that older workers were much less

² <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/young-people-not-education-employment-training/?lang=en>

³ Fullick, L., (2009), *Poverty Reduction and Lifelong Learning*, IFLL Thematic Paper 6, NIACE
<http://www.niace.org.uk/lifelonglearninginquiry/docs/IFLL-Poverty.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tc%3A77-318453>

⁵ <http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/141120-framework-for-co-investment-in-skills-en.pdf>

likely to be offered participation in employer provided training than younger workers.

The Strategy for Older People Phase 3⁶ and the 'Ageing Well in Wales' programme⁷ highlight the importance of prioritising employment and learning opportunities for older people, to maintain their wellbeing and to empower them to remain engaged in society. Further education can make a major contribution to both learning and social opportunities for older people and help reduce the effects of loneliness and isolation. Therefore we would like to see a Further Education policy that encompasses lifelong learning and addresses the above issues.

Delivering high quality apprenticeships

UCU recently responded to a consultation document from the Welsh Government on the Higher Education Wales Act in which the government is committing to ensure that large sums of public money do not end up in the hands of organisations which are not registered charities. UCU would like to see the next government commit to consider making the same conditions apply to the expenditure on Post 16 education, including spending on apprenticeships.

We would argue that investment in further and adult education would be a more appropriate way of enabling adults to improve their skills, increase their employment opportunities, enhance their wellbeing and improve the communities they live in.

In our response to the Welsh Government's consultation on 'Aligning the apprenticeship model to the needs of the Welsh economy,' we argued that

"Apprenticeships need to be a robust and respected vocational route. They need to offer real opportunities for employment and not be a means of cheap labour"

If apprenticeships are to truly be seen as a high quality vocational pathway, there needs to be greater input from, not just employers but also those delivering the programmes. Lecturers in further education have a wealth of knowledge and experience that could be drawn upon, to help develop a world class apprenticeship model. They are dual professionals, not just having industrial expertise, but also that of teaching; giving them a unique role in the development of a skilled workforce.

There is currently much focus on employer need with regard to the development of the apprenticeship programme, but this should be balanced with community and individual need. A more balanced input into the development of apprenticeship routes would help to empower and inform all stakeholders and help to strengthen the understanding and the value of the provision. The focus should therefore be on the needs of industry rather than employer needs and

⁶ <http://gov.wales/topics/health/publications/socialcare/strategies/older/?lang=en>

⁷ <http://www.ageingwellinwales.com/en/themes/opportunities-for-learning-and-employment>

should include the input of the related trade unions, to help ensure that apprentices receive quality training that will lead to sustainable employment.

Currently employers are expected to provide training for their apprentices, but how often, when and where, are at the discretion of the employer. In order to strengthen progression routes there needs to be some clarification and standardisation of expected levels of training, supported by appropriate regulation, otherwise there can be no parity between the quality of apprenticeships that differing employers provide, which will make it very difficult to determine the appropriate next level of progression.

Whilst it may be appropriate to offer higher level apprenticeships to provide an alternative undergraduate equivalent, we are of the opinion that the apprenticeship route is not generally suited to older adults, most of whom will have had work experience and therefore will not need the 'world of work' element of the apprenticeship scheme. They may also be prevented from taking part due to the 'low pay' offered to apprentices. We would suggest that higher apprenticeships, as a progression route for older adults, should be replaced with appropriately paid employment, offering appropriate continuous professional development, as it is likely that many such adults will already have level 3 qualifications as a minimum. Perhaps what is needed here is clarification of the use of the word 'apprentice'. Apprentice, suggests a person who has limited knowledge and understanding of a particular set of occupational skills, whereas studying a subject at level 4 or above would suggest that the individual already has some mastery of the subject area.

We further argue that despite the promotion of the co-investment model, which relies on the financial contributions of employers, we are not wholly convinced by the argument that funding to the FE sector will 'trickle down' from SME's into the colleges. In order to provide a robust support mechanism, FE colleges need proper funding of their core provision. Current funding cuts are stretching colleges to their financial limits. It cannot be expected that colleges will be able to deliver the remit required of them, to support the apprenticeship agenda, if they do not have the facilities or the staff to support this. Neither can we expect the remaining staff to deliver the level of teaching and learning required to promote the apprenticeship scheme as a high quality alternative route to employment, if they are faced with the ever increasing workloads and class sizes required of the effects of endless 'efficiency gains'. Alongside this, there is likely to be the increasing problem of failing to attract adequately qualified staff with appropriate industrial experience, while working conditions for lecturers continue to be eroded.

Therefore we call for a policy for further education that commits to the inclusion of the FE Sector in the development of a high quality and meaningful apprenticeship programme; one that is developed in partnership with the relevant industries, trade unions, college lecturers and college managers as well as employers, to ensure that the sector receives adequate and accountable public funding, in order to develop a high quality and meaningful vocational route into employment.

Assisting the delivery of HE in FE

The Government in its latest Review of higher education in further education institutions, May 2015⁸ argues that “There should be a more holistic and regional view of post-16 education in Wales, supported by stronger regional planning. Collaboration between higher and further education providers needs to be strengthened so that progression and even simultaneous study in both sectors can become a reality” (p2)

The review makes five recommendations, listed below:

R1 HE in FE part-time delivery to be expanded in critical economic sectors.

R2 HEFCW and ColegauCymru to meet with the Welsh Government to agree on how HE in FE delivery can be developed and expanded to meet the changing needs of the economy.

R3 HEFCW and ColegauCymru to work with Regional Skills Partnerships to ensure joint strategic planning of HE in FE delivery between HEIs and FEIs to support the expansion of delivery.

R4 The Welsh Government to consider how HEFCW’s funding and quality assurance arrangements can support the development of HE in FE provision.

R5 HEFCW to consider strengthening guidance on franchise arrangements between colleges and universities to provide stability and support strategic planning between the HE and FE sectors.

UCU submitted evidence to the Independent review of higher education funding and student finance arrangements (Diamond Review) supporting the delivery of HE in FE but we need to ensure that staff are given sufficient CPD time within their workload to ensure the quality and parity of vocational HE and academic HE.

It is the case that staff in further education are required by law to be members of the Education Workforce Council (EWC) and this body should be the body which ensures that staff have access to good quality CPD to be able to deliver HE in FE to support this agenda.

Thus far the focus has been on school teachers and the ‘new deal.’ We recognise the importance of the new deal and the changes the government wish to see in our school sector, but FE staff have been forced, by law, to be members of the EWC and therefore they should have a reasonable expectation that the EWC will provide at least the same opportunities as is being offered to the school teachers.

The lack of a policy for FE has left FE staff out in the cold, despite our continual reminders to the EWC and civil servants, we have seen little progress on this matter and little engagement with the FE trades unions about CPD suitable for FE staff.

⁸ <http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/publications/reports/a-review-of-he-delivered-in-further-education-institutions/?lang=en>

Further the review itself makes no mention of discussions with trades unions about the impact that the recommendations may have on staff in both further and higher education. Does social partnership not apply to post 16 education sector?

Therefore we call for a policy for further education that commits to the inclusion of the professional opinions of lecturers through their relevant trade unions. One that recognises the values and expertise of those with the knowledge and understanding required, to deliver the quality expected in the post 16 education system, across a wide variety of skills and levels.

Further we call for commitment to ensure the democratic election of the representatives of FE lecturers to the Education Workforce Council and for access to appropriate CPD, to ensure that all members of the Education Workforce Council have equal opportunity to develop professional skills.

Assisting the implementation of the Programme for Government

Since the demise of the Funding Council for Further Education we have seen a distinct lack of government policy providing a direction and mission for the Further Education (FE) sector as a whole, with the exception of the Transformation Agenda, which saw institutions in the sector reduce from 23 institutions in 2000 to 12 FE institutions excluding St David's six form college, YMCA and WEA in 2015.

However, the Welsh Government is heavily reliant on the FE sector to deliver its wider policy agenda, yet despite that fact the FE sector has no clear role and function articulated in a government policy document.

The attached appendix serves to highlight the reliance this government has placed on FE delivering for the different policy initiatives it has introduced during this term of office.

The next government of Wales must articulate in policy the role that FE should play in the future life of Wales. FE is uniquely placed to deliver on the Poverty Agenda, widening access to vocational higher education, providing a second chance education for those who didn't make the most of their chances at school and responding to the ever changing needs of employers in relation to the skills issues they face.

Without a current policy for the FE sector, we are witnessing the destruction of its core function, of providing second chance education. The clear steer given to other education sectors has, perhaps inadvertently, contributed to the neglect of a vital part of further education; its contribution to the community as a whole.

The indirect benefits of FE include increased civil participation and improved racial tolerance. At an individual level, adults often cite learning as increasing their confidence and changing self-perceptions.⁹

FE should not be regarded as simply a vehicle to support routes to HE or employment. It has a far greater role which deserves to be protected by its own distinct policy.

⁹ Fullick, L., (2009), *Poverty Reduction and Lifelong Learning*, IFLL Thematic Paper 6, NIACE <http://www.niace.org.uk/lifelonglearninginquiry/docs/IFLL-Poverty.pdf>

APPENDIX

The role of Further Education in the Programme for Government

Agriculture :- Independent Review of Learning delivered by Further Education Colleges and the Relevance of that delivery in Supporting Farm Businesses in Wales, Jan 2015

Section 1.11 reads

“ The primary objective of the FE sector with agricultural provision in Wales is the delivery of high quality further education. An additional activity is that of developing progression opportunities from FE to HE. This requires a robust partnership with the university sector not only for academic approval but also to support the development of the subject specialism. I cannot overstate the importance of the latter if we are to establish meaningful and enduring coherence to FE/HE links in agriculture in Wales. It is important for the progression to be provided full time, part-time or work-based.

The FE sector colleges are actually exploring ways to exploit their multi disciplinarily approach by broadening their agriculture mission to enhance rural innovation, enterprise, food chain relationships and efficiencies. They need to be actively encouraged to progress in this direction, as they could be major players in future.

However, we need to be aware that the removal of the higher education funding cap in England together with the possible outcomes of the Independent Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance arrangements in Wales, may lead to tension within FE/HE relationships in future due to competition for students in a more market-driven recruitment climate.”

Section 3.16 suggests

“The colleges could play a key role in developing and demonstrating emerging innovative applied scientific thinking into holistic sustainable farm systems. The resources available at IBERS and the colleges working together with the Welsh Government and other agencies could provide an excellent platform for taking our industry forward.

Horticulture: Strategic Action Plan for the Welsh Horticulture Industry, April 2010

Section 3.15 states

“In order to improve the supply of suitably trained and qualified labour within the industry, there is a need to assess skills required by businesses and communicate this to training providers.

There is also a requirement to review the current education and training provision available to the industry and raise the profile of horticulture as a career opportunity. It is important to consider whether appropriate delivery mechanisms are in place to provide the skills and knowledge base to make Wales’ horticulture truly sustainable. The industry and the Welsh Assembly Government also need to invest in skills development and the importance of this is reflected in the Welsh Assembly Government’s Skills That Work for Wales Strategy and Action Plan.”

Section 3.25 argues that

“Recruitment and retention of suitably skilled and trained labour is a challenge in all areas of the horticulture industry, partly due to poor awareness of the

variety of career opportunities the sector offers. There is both a challenge and an opportunity to raise the profile of horticulture and to encourage more people to choose horticulture as a career path and to find ways to develop and retain staff.”

Economic Renewal: a new direction, July 2010

Page 4

The government state as a matter of fact that “Most importantly we cannot deliver on this vision by ourselves. It requires us to build on the partnerships forged during the downturn – with the private sector, the third sector, local authorities, Higher and Further Education, the NHS and others.”

Page 27

“It is a central tenet of For Our Future that that the provision of foundation degrees in Wales is fully responsive and opened up to the skills needs of our employers, current employees and the future workforce. Equally we expect Higher and Further Education providers not only to work collaboratively and exploit their combined resources in the provision of foundation degrees, but importantly to work closely in networks with employers – particularly at a regional level.”

Page 28

“Wales’ changing demography means that fewer young people will be entering the workforce, making it ever more important to improve the existing stock of adult skills. Investment in adult learning, particularly training in the workplace, will be vital in maintaining and enhancing our competitiveness.

There are many ways in which current policies and programmes support adult skills. For example, planning guidance to Further Education institutions instructs them to increase basic skills provision and support local Spatial Plan priorities.”

Science for Wales Delivery Plan, March 2012

Section 5.2 commits to

“The Minister for Education and Skills and Deputy Minister for Skills have published their intention to improve labour market intelligence. This will provide the information needed by learners and education providers to better match the skills of young people to the demands of industry. The coordination and dissemination of this information, through more effective careers advice, will provide the information needed by learners to make informed choices on their futures, including the availability of careers in STEM-related disciplines. This information will be allied to the planning of apprenticeship and further education provision to ensure that state funded education is up to the challenge of securing the skills needed by the current and future STEM business community. The Welsh Government will also work with the higher education community to ensure that STEM pathways, from school to higher education, are available and meet the demands of the Welsh economy.”

Building Resilient Communities: Taking forward the Tackling Poverty Action Plan, July 2013

On page 9 it is the government aspiration that

“.....more pupils from Communities First areas will go into Higher Education. HEFCW has a specific aim to raise the number of pupils that achieve this goal. The Communities First programme will continue to work both with HEFCW and local Universities and Further Education colleges to support more young people to access Higher and Further Education and remove the barriers that exist.”

Towards Sustainable Growth: An action plan for the Food and Drink Industry 2014-2020

Section 4.4 highlights

"Graduates and school leavers are not attracted in the same numbers as in other industries. Universities and colleges can find it difficult to fill places on food courses and degrees. In contrast university and college leavers with food related qualifications find it relatively easy to secure interesting and rewarding jobs that offer career paths. There is clearly a disconnect. The 'block' may be fewer students studying the sciences post 16 or, more likely; it may be attributable to perceptions or misperceptions about exactly what working in the food industry entails."

A living language: a language for living – Moving forward, August 2014

On page 14 the government acknowledge

"We also need to build on the work of the bilingual champions in further education and work-based learning to ensure the further development and sustaining of Welsh-medium and bilingual provision post-16 and ensure that the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol continues to develop and thrive."

Capital Investment Fund 2015-16: Welsh language Centres and learning Spaces Feb 2015

"The Welsh Government is opening a capital investment fund of £1 million for 2015-16 that will be specifically targeted to support the development of centres and/or learning spaces which promote the use of Welsh or immersion in Welsh. This fund builds upon the success of the £1.25m fund for 2014-15, which was a key commitment in our policy document A living language: a language for living - Moving forward published in August 2014.

The funding will be awarded to local authorities, further education institutions or universities who can demonstrate an innovative approach and an emphasis on working in partnership with others for the benefit of the wider community."

The Youth Engagement and Progression Framework – Implementation Plan 2014

aims to reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). The Welsh Government are determined to reduce the level of NEETs in Wales and the economic and individual costs associated with this. It is clear that this will involve the FE sector.

Page 5

"The national measure of young people who are NEET in Wales shows that the figure for 16 to 18-year-olds who are NEET has remained at levels of between 10 and 13 per cent in the last five years to 2012, reflecting the longer term trend, while the rate for 19 to 24-year-olds increased markedly following the last recession in 2008. International comparisons show Wales is not performing as well as other countries.

We are determined to make further improvement. There are clear benefits to the Welsh economy, wider society and most importantly to young people and their families in increasing youth engagement and progression. Wales needs more young people to successfully progress to further and higher education and into skilled employment. The failure to engage young people increases the costs associated

with health and social services, and contributes to the challenges associated with long-term unemployment.

A study by the University of York in 2010 estimated the additional lifetime costs associated with being NEET at over £160,000 per person in England in 2008. When applied to the current cohort of 16 to 18-year-olds in Wales who are NEET this suggests the cost to Wales as a whole of failing to engage these young people is circa £2 billion. There is an economic as well as a moral imperative to deliver improvement."

The document goes on to outline Welsh Government expectations of improving the quality of existing provision and supporting the provision of the **Youth Guarantee**, which is the offer, acceptance and commencement of a suitable place in education or training for any young person making the first time transition from compulsory education at age 16. It is quite clear that FE colleges will be expected to rise to the challenge.

Page 45

"[The Youth Guarantee requires] post-16 providers to respond to any challenges identified locally. Many FE colleges are already playing an important role locally in addressing the challenge of reducing NEET. We think the FE sector can do even more. We know that the vast majority of college start dates are still in September and October but the introduction of the Youth Guarantee will require more flexibility than this. We will work with ColegauCymru to identify what more the FE sector can do."

Page 47

"Welsh Government to work with ColegauCymru to identify what more the FE sector can do to support the implementation of the Youth Guarantee."

Page 51

"We know that many young people who are not currently participating [in education or training] are highly motivated by work, but do not yet have the skills or practical experience to move into employment. That is why we are making substantive experience of the workplace a key element of our 16 to 19 study programmes. By providing young people with meaningful work experience closer to the point at which they will enter the labour market, we will not only better prepare young people for employment, but also make continuing in learning more attractive to those young people who might otherwise not have participated. We have already made experience of the world of work a central feature of our traineeship programme and will continue to push the FE sector to do the same with its programme delivery."

The tracking of those that might be at risk of becoming NEET and providing opportunities for them to engage, is also part of the Welsh Government **Tackling Poverty Action Plan 2012-2016** as outlined on page 17 of the plan.

The Skills Implementation Plan 2014 sets out how the Welsh Government proposes to develop a sustainable skills system. Part of this plan establishes a Skills Priorities Programme led by Wales' FE sector.

Page 10 of the skills implementation plan

“[the] **Skills Priorities Programme** will focus on the vital role of further education in responding to local employer demand for skills. The programme will deliver vocational skills provision through further education institutions in line with regional and local employer demand for skills between Level 2 and Level 5.

Also key to the Skills Implementation Plan will be the introduction of the Skills Gateway, an online resource for providing skills and employment information and advice. Many of the courses listed on the **Skills Gateway** for adults, are provided by FE colleges; indicating an important role for FE in the provision of post 19 learning.

Agenda Item 3.4

P-04-646 Petition against Welsh Draft Non-statutory Guidance for Local Authorities on Elective Home Education.

Petition wording:

In May 2014 the Welsh Assembly Government Minister for Education announced that new non-statutory guidelines would be drawn up for Elective Home Education, following consultation with home educating families.

Draft guidelines have been published for consultation which do not reflect the previously strongly stated views of those home educating families.

We believe that these draft guidelines are poorly written, misleading and likely to lead to further breakdown in relationships between home educating families and Local Authorities. We call upon the Welsh Assembly Government to retract the draft guidelines as not being fit for purpose.

Instead local authorities should work towards demonstrating their knowledge of the existing law on home education, and adhere to the existing, clearly defined guidelines.

Petition raised by: Lucy Bear

Date petition first considered by Committee: 14 July 2015

Number of signatures: 2,140 Online signatures



Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-646
Ein cyf/Our ref HL/01157/15

William Powell AM
Chair - Petitions Committee

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

1 July 2015

Dear William

Thank you for your letter regarding a petition from Lucy Bear, about non-statutory guidance for Local Authorities on elective home education.

In 2012, the Welsh Government consulted on legislative proposals to monitor home education. As detailed in my statement of 6 May 2014, the consultation revealed a divide in opinion between local authorities and home educating communities. Responses to the consultation highlighted the importance of good communication and collaboration between home educating parents and local authorities. It is for this reason that we have focused on developing non-statutory guidance to help local authorities foster closer and more constructive relationships with home educating families.

The guidance, which will supersede Section 6 of the Inclusion and Pupil Support Guidance, will aim to support local authorities in developing trusting positive relationships with home education communities, to encourage effective partnership working.

There exists good practice among some local authorities who have developed strong working partnerships with home educating communities; this has produced positive outcomes for learner, and some of these examples of good practice have been included in the draft guidance currently out for consultation.

My officials made every effort to inform the home educating community of the consultation when it was launched online in May. All respondents to the previous consultation on registration and monitoring were contacted directly (where contact details were provided) to highlight the current consultation, and to request their feedback. Local authority representatives and voluntary organisations such as Save the Children and the Children's Commissioner were also contacted directly. In addition, prior to this consultation, Wavehill Consultants engaged with EHE families and communities across Wales. This engagement informed the development of the draft non-statutory guidance document. The Welsh

Government has no plans to retract what is a consultation document. To do so would risk denying stakeholders the opportunity to express their views, and influence the development of the final guidance document. I would encourage all home education stakeholders to respond to the consultation.

The consultation will close on the 3 July and the guidance will be amended, where appropriate, taking into account the views and issues raised during the consultation by all stakeholders. The non-statutory guidance will be published in September.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Huw Lewis'.

Huw Lewis AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau
Minister for Education and Skills

P-04-646 Petition against Welsh Draft Non-statutory Guidance for Local Authorities on Elective Home Education – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 08.07.15

The published draft guidelines do not reflect the previously strongly stated views of those home educating families. We believe that these draft guidelines are poorly written, misleading and likely to lead to further breakdown in relationships between home educating families and local authorities.

We call upon the Welsh Assembly Government to retract the draft guidelines as not being fit for purpose. Instead local authorities should work towards demonstrating their knowledge of the existing law on home education, and adhere to the existing, clearly defined guidelines.

1. We are concerned that areas of the new Guidance overlook part of the Education Act 1996 s436A:

(2)In exercising their functions under this section a local education authority must have regard to any guidance given from time to time by the Secretary of State

The relevant guidance is Statutory guidance to help prevent children and young people from missing education, Welsh Assembly Government Circular No: 006/2010 which states:

1.22 The duty does not apply to children and young people whose parents have chosen to electively home educate them. There is no such duty to identify the suitability of the education.

The parts of the new guidance which ignore this are as follows:

Page 7: 'Under section 436A of the Education Act 1996, local authorities have a duty to make arrangements to identify children not receiving education and the suitability of that education'.

Page 9: 'The local authority should consider whether there is existing evidence to indicate a cause for concern over the withdrawal. Advice should be sought from education welfare services where there are concerns'. There is no mention that local authorities should assume a suitable education is taking place.

Page 22: *'local authorities have a legal duty to establish the identities of children who are not registered at school and not receiving a suitable education'*.

Page 22: *'It is recommended that an initial meeting take place with families to discuss their provision and any advice and support needs they may have'*. This is monitoring. After the initial confirmation of EHE status local authorities should revert to the aforementioned guidance 1.22.

Page 22: *'Thereafter, it is recommended that the local authority should seek to make contact with home educating families on at least an annual basis. These meetings should be seen as an opportunity to provide information and support to home educating families, to listen and respond to any concerns that they may have, as well as considering evidence that a suitable education is being delivered'*. This is routine monitoring with no basis in law. Evidence should not be sought unless there are concerns a suitable education is not taking place.

Page 23: *'local authorities do not have the right to insist on observing education in the home, and where a parent elects not to allow access to their home, alternative arrangements should be made'*. This implies local authorities have the right to routinely monitor. Evidence should only be sought where there are concerns a suitable education is not taking place.

2. Page 8 states *'Parents whose children are registered pupils at a school should ensure that their names are removed from the school admissions register when they withdraw them from school to home educate to avoid being liable to prosecution for failing to ensure their child's regular attendance at the school where they are registered'*. This contradicts the Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 s8(1)(d) whereby it is the duty of the Headteacher to remove the name of the pupil from the school register.

3. Page 9 states *'Under section 437 of the Education Act 1996, where it appears to a local authority that a child of compulsory school age is not receiving suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, the local authority may serve a notice on the parent requiring the parent to satisfy them (within a period of at least 15 days specified in the notice) that the child is receiving such education'*. This should specify that it is a period of 15 school days.

4. Flexischooling is not mentioned.

5. Page 2 states *'The overriding priority of this approach is to secure the best outcomes for children and young people who are electively home educated through developing constructive partnerships between EHE families and local authorities'*. The document is not laid out clearly and is likely to confuse both local authorities and EHE families. Such confusion is likely to cause conflict and will not help foster good relationships. The document needs severe editing to ensure clarity.

6. Legal points need to be accurate and clearly stated.

7. Page 2 states *'This new guidance has been developed through an extensive process of engagement. This process of engagement has taken on board the views of local authorities, the elective home educating community in Wales, and key strategic stakeholders'*. We would question how extensive this engagement has been. Many EHE families in Wales have reported they received no communication regarding this, despite being 'known' to their local authorities. Also stakeholders who were interviewed report that their views appear to have been ignored.

8. Page 11 draws attention to UNCRC: *'Article 12 provides that children have the right to say what they think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account'*. There is an incorrect implication here that parents and children are in conflict. Article 12 provides a right to express views and for due weight to be given to those views in accordance with the age and maturity of the child, not a right to have opinions taken into account. It also ignores Article 5:

'Parties shall respect the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents or, to provide, in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child, appropriate direction and guidance in the exercise by the child of the rights recognized in the present Convention'.

It also appears to contradict page 19 of the Guidance: *'It is important to keep in mind that the decision to home educate rests with the parents. Local authorities and schools should respect parental choice'*.

9. Page 12/13 states *'This should help to minimise the removal of children from education as an action of last resort by the family. Schools and local authorities should bear in mind that parents often opt for EHE as a last resort when such*

conflicts cannot be resolved. This implies EHE is regarded as second-class form of education and implies local authorities would prefer it if children were in school.

10. Page 15 mentions approaches adopted in Caerphilly. *'A special pre-Christmas event included a visit to the local zoo for the 'children who wouldn't get a school trip'.* This is exceptionally patronising to EHE families whose children regularly go out on visits. Many EHE families would reject the idea of a regimented 'school trip' which contrasts with the relative freedom EHE provides.

11. Page 15 states *'It is important to establish a consistent approach towards home educators across Wales. Many home educators will have moved from one local authority to another'.* Yet Page 16 contradicts this by stating *'Working on a regional basis, consortia could formulate their own regional responses to EHE tailored to the communities within their area, working with partners on a regional level'.* It is imperative that local authorities adopt a consistent approach to EHE across Wales.

12. Page 17 states *'In addition, it is recommended that local authority officers, in the course of their engagement with these groups, raise awareness of opportunities to undertake training on safeguarding and child protection that are already available to a range of practitioners working with children and young people'.* There is concern that training people who run local EHE groups in child protection is likely to break down their relationships with families who may feel they are now under suspicion simply for choosing EHE.

13. Page 22 states *'The views of home educated children and young people regarding the education they are receiving, their preferences, aspirations and ambitions should be discussed in these meetings'.* This implies children should be compelled to share their views with local authorities – there is no legal requirement for this.

14. Page 24 states *'local authorities should also inform parents and, where appropriate, their children of possible problems that they might encounter if their qualifications are not sufficiently recognised by employers, or further or higher education establishments'.* Informing children is the role of the parent; this usurps that role.

15. Page 28 states *'It is of great concern to many local authority officers with responsibility for overseeing EHE that there are some children and young people living within their local authority area that they are either unaware of, or have been unable to see'*. Firstly there is no responsibility for the local Authority to 'oversee' EHE, that is the role of the parents. Secondly local authorities have no legal remit or duty to 'see' children.

16. Page 28 states *'Tracing children and ensuring that they are safe is a real challenge for local authorities'*. Local authorities have no proactive duty to make sure children are safe and no legal remit to do so.

17. Page 28 states *'It is the lack of visibility of some EHE children that often concerns many local officers that support the EHE community'*. EHE children are not invisible. They are often out in their local communities being seen by a wide range of individuals including – but not exclusive to – health professionals, tutors, neighbours, leaders of organised activities such as Scouts etc, staff at shops and educational facilities, and the wide network of other EHE families.

18. Page 32 states *'Home educating parents need to be made aware that professionals involved in truancy sweeps may need to verify any information given to them in these circumstances'*. If a child identifies themselves as EHE then no further information should be sought as there is no legal basis for verifying information during a truancy sweep. There is no legal right to demand information from the child unless an officer suspects that they may have committed an offence. Truancy is not an offence committed by the child.

19. Page 3 of the guidelines explains how they seek to 'build consensus and trust between local authorities and EHE families in Wales, and develop positive engagement and appropriate support'. However there is an overwhelming view that the thrust of the document is about local authorities establishing a hierarchical system of control and monitoring over EHE families. There is little to promote 'consensus' or 'trust'.

Agenda Item 3.5

P-04-647 Change the Adult Ticket Age from 16 to 18.

Petition wording:

People under the age of 18 aren't considered adult. The price of an adult ticket for Arriva is obscene for people aged 16-17. It costs £2.60 for a one way ticket to Cardiff from two stops away. Normally children aged 16-17 would ask their parents for money for trains, buses etc. so why should we be made to pay a higher amount if we are still dependant on our parents to loan us money? We can't do other things like drive, drink, vote so why should we pay a higher fare? I'm asking people to sign this petition to higher the age of the adult tickets as the real adult age is 18.

According to the United Nations convention on the rights of a child, this international law requires that the government acts in best interests of the child, which is defined as anyone under the age of 18.

Additional Information

According to the United Nations convention on the rights of a child, this international law requires that the government acts in best interests of the child, which is defined as anyone under the age of 18.

Petition raised by: Harry Jacob Wood

Date petition first considered by Committee:

Number of signatures: 50 Online signatures

Edwina Hart MBE CStJ AC / AM
Gweinidog yr Economi, Gwyddoniaeth a Thrafnidiaeth
Minister for Economy, Science and Transport



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-647
Ein cyf/Our ref EH/02865/15

William Powell AM
Chair - petitions committee
committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

2 July 2015

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter of 24 June regarding the petition the committee has received from Harry Jacob Wood who raises concerns about rail fares for passengers aged 16 to 18.

I note Mr Wood's concerns. All individual fare pricing decisions and related issues such as changing the age that discounts may be offered are a commercial matter for Arriva Trains Wales. Mr Wood may wish to contact Arriva Trains Wales and the Association of Train Operating Companies to explore possible ticketing offers that may be suitable.

In the meantime there is a 16-25 railcard available for £30 for a year, or £70 for 3 years, which offers one-third off the price of most rail tickets. There is no monthly fee for this railcard. Full details can be found at:

<http://www.16-25railcard.co.uk/>

Edwina Hart

Agenda Item 4.1

P-04-625 Support for Safe Nursing Staffing Levels (Wales) Bill

Petition wording

We the undersigned call upon Members of the National Assembly for Wales Health and Social Care Committee to vote in favour of the Safe Nursing Staffing Levels (Wales) Bill once it is introduced into the Assembly.

Additional Information

Kirsty Williams AM is soon going to be introducing the Safe Nurse Staffing Levels (Wales) Bill into the National Assembly for Wales. This bill would enshrine in law Chief Nursing Officer in Wales' core principles regarding staffing levels on all medical and surgical wards. The Royal College of Nursing believes that this piece of legislation is necessary to improve patient safety and will help to restore patients faith in the Welsh NHS as well as ensuring that patients in hospitals in Wales receive the nursing care and attention they need and deserve and allows Nurses to be able to deliver care to the standard that they are trained and want to deliver.

Lead petitioner: Richard Jones MBE

First considered by the Committee:

Number of signatures: 1,579 online signatures.

William Powell AM
Chair, Petitions Committee

29 June 2015

Dear William,

'P-04-625 Support for Safe Nursing Staffing Levels (Wales) Bill'

At its meeting on 17 June 2015, the Health and Social Care Committee ("the Committee") considered the petition 'P-04-625 Support for Safe Nursing Staffing Levels (Wales) Bill'. The petition called on members of the Committee to vote in favour of the Safe Nurse Staffing Levels (Wales) Bill once introduced.

In your letter of 16 April 2015 you asked that the Committee:

- take into account the support for the petition in drawing up its Stage 1 report on the Safe Nurse Staffing Levels (Wales) Bill; and
- inform the Petitions Committee of progress and indicate when the petition should be closed.

The Committee reported on the general principles of the Bill on 8 May.


The Committee's report makes reference to the petition in paragraph 29 and was informed by the petition's content. The Committee concluded that, subject to the amendments proposed in its report, the Assembly agree the general principles of the Bill. The general principles of the Bill were debated and agreed by the Assembly on 3 June 2015. The Bill is now at Stage 2.

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg | We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English



In light of this, the Committee agreed at its meeting on 17 June 2015 to recommend that the petition should be closed. Information about future stages of the Bill's proceedings is available on the [Safe Nurse Staffing Levels \(Wales\) Bill webpage](#).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David F. Rees." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

David Rees AM

Chair, Health and Social Care Committee



Richard Jones MBE



12 May 2015

Dear Richard,

P-04-625 Support for Safe Nursing Staffing Levels (Wales) Bill

You will be aware that, at its meeting on 24 March 2015, the Petitions Committee agreed to formally refer your petition to the [Health and Social Care Committee](#) ('the Committee'). The petition was referred in order for the Committee to take into account the level of support for the [Safe Nurse Staffing Levels \(Wales\) Bill](#) ('the Bill') in its Stage 1 report.

The Committee published its [report](#) on its Stage 1 scrutiny of the general principles of the Bill today, 8 May 2015. You will note the report makes reference to your petition in paragraph 29. Furthermore, the Committee has stated that, subject to the amendments it has proposed, the Assembly should agree the general principles of the Bill on the basis that primary legislation could be beneficial in order to build on the Minister's existing tools and powers in this area.

You may be aware that the [Stage 1 Plenary debate](#) on the general principles of the Bill is provisionally scheduled for Wednesday 3 June 2015. Subject to the agreement of the Bill's general principles by the Assembly at Stage 1 time has been allocated in the Committee's [work programme](#) for Stage 2 proceedings to take place on 9 July.

Bae Caerdydd
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

Ffôn / Tel: 0300 200 6354

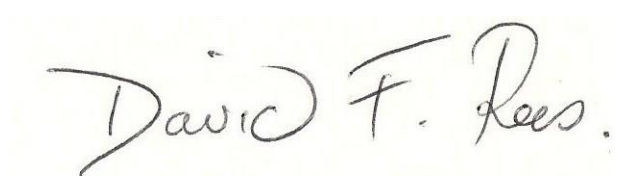
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SeneddHealth@Assembly.Wales

Trydar / Twitter: [@seneddiechyd](https://twitter.com/seneddiechyd) / [@seneddhealth](https://twitter.com/seneddhealth)

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We will ensure that you, and the Petitions Committee, are kept informed on the progress of the Bill. As your petition has been formally referred to the Health and Social Care Committee, it will take a decision on future consideration of your petition, including whether it should be closed, once the Stage 1 debate has taken place.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David F. Rees." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D' and 'R'.

David Rees AM

Chair, Health and Social Care Committee

cc William Powell AM, Chair of the Petitions Committee

RICHARD JONES MBE

7th July 2015,

Mr William Powell AM

Chair – Petitions Committee,

Ty Hywel,

Cardiff Bay,

Cardiff

CF99 1 NA

Dear Mr Powell,

Re: P-04-625 ‘Support for the Safe Nurse Staffing Levels (Wales) Bill’

Further to an email from Kayleigh Driscoll, Petitions Committee Deputy Clerk on 2nd July 2015, I would very much like my petition to remain open rather than close.

I would further urge the Petitions Committee to recommend that Stage Two scrutiny of ‘The Safe Nurse Staffing Levels (Wales) Bill’, commences as soon as possible.

I was absolutely delighted when on the 3rd June 2015 the Assembly unanimously (with agreement from all political parties) agreed the Bill should proceed to Stage Two of the legislative process.

This Stage Two discussion in The Health and Social Care Committee was scheduled for 9th July 2015, but has recently been cancelled. I am dismayed by this turn of events and I fear bureaucratic delays will be used as excuses to prevent the Bill from progressing.

Large numbers of the Public and many Nurses signed to show their support for this Bill and I think it would be quite wrong for this Bill to be ‘lost’ in the administrative maze. The whole Assembly has agreed it supports the general principles, so the discussion on the detail must be allowed to happen. The Stage Two discussions should be arranged as soon as possible.

As a retired Registered Nurse and Nurse Teacher of over 44 years' experience in Wales, I am convinced this Bill will quite literally save patients' lives. For example, a similar law when introduced in California reduced 30 day mortality rates by between 10% – 13%. Professor Rafferty's research (carried out in the UK) showed a 26% increase in mortality on wards with a lower staffing ratio's.

Quite simply nursing at the hospital bedside requires time. Poor nursing levels means an increase in patient falls, infections, medication mistakes, a lack of communication, less care of nutrition and hydration needs to say nothing about supporting the patients hygiene needs etc. All of this research is referenced fully in the extensive evidence taken by the Health & Social Care Committee in their Inquiry.

It will come as not surprise to you that I have followed the discussions on this Bill in the Assembly very closely. I have been struck by the number of Assembly Members who have commented that they are quite convinced of the link between nursing numbers and safe care for patients and do not need convincing about this, but instead some have expressed the view that legislation is not needed because (I paraphrase slightly) 'It should happen anyway'. As an outside observer to these discussions, I am quite astonished by this attitude. I'm sure we can all agree that many things should indeed 'happen anyway' but when they are important things (such as saving patient's lives) we MUST take all the steps we can to secure this happening. Laws have been passed on Health & Safety that have saved lives in dangerous industries. Equality Legislation is another example of legislation that has altered organisational behaviour and allowed the talents of different groups to flourish in Business. There are laws on food hygiene and there are laws on the number of staff in industries such as animal welfare, aviation and education.

The evidence (please see the RCN Employment Survey 2013 and other information from the Inquiry of the Health & Social Care Committee) clearly shows that our Health Boards here in Wales are not meeting the current recommended standards on safe nursing levels. As the cuts continue to impact, it is a growing temptation to NHS Managers to save money by cutting nursing posts. This causes the quality of patient care to decline quite rapidly and too often this is only recognised in retrospect when a major scandal hits the headlines.

Throughout my career it has been a privilege to care or to support quality care of patients throughout the NHS in Wales and I want to see Safe Nurse Staffing Levels

enshrined in Law, which should be the right of every one of your constituents across Wales.

Thank you once again for your consideration of my petition. For the reasons I have outlined above I would prefer the petition to remain open until the Stage Two discussion is held. I would further urge the Petitions Committee to recommend that Stage Two Scrutiny of the Safe Nurse Staffing Levels (Wales) Bill commence as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Jones

RICHARD JONES

P-04-537 Planting Trees to Reduce Flooding

Petition wording:

We call on the Welsh Assembly to urge the Welsh Government to reduce flood risk to thousands of homes across the country by supporting the planting of at least 10 million trees over the next 5 years, creating hedges, tree belts and wooded areas targeted where they will best help soak up rainfall and slow down water runoff. This tree planting will count towards the 100,000 hectare tree planting target the Welsh Government has already set, to soak up CO₂ from the atmosphere.

Petition raised by: Coed Cadw

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 18 February 2014

Number of signatures: 2708

Carl Sargeant AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol
Minister for Natural Resources



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref CS/00973/15

William Powell AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

30 June 2015

Dear Bill,

I refer to correspondence dated 8 May from the Woodland Trust/Coed Cadw to the Petitions Committee regarding petition number P-03-537.

I note the Petitioner's point that planting trees and hedgerows contributes to alleviating the effects of flooding and planting schemes in appropriate locations can make a contribution to flood risk management. The Welsh Government has introduced Glastir Restoration, Woodland Creation and Woodland Management in order to increase woodland planting in Wales as a contribution towards its woodland creation aspirations and I note their comment that Glastir alone cannot achieve our objectives in this area. However during the development of Glastir, the Welsh Government consulted widely and took on board input from stakeholders which we believe has been incorporated into the scheme wherever possible, including from the Woodland Trust. It is important to note that Glastir applications must comply with the UK Forestry Standard which takes into account the Floods Directive which is designed to help EU Member States prevent and limit floods and mitigate against their damaging effects on human health, the environment, infrastructure and property.

In Wales there has been an increasing amount of interest and support for the use of the Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS) approach to manage surface water. Natural Resources Wales (NRW) chairs a SuDS Working Group that aims to share good practice and increase the use of SuDS solutions. The Group includes representatives from the Welsh Local Government Association, water and sewerage undertakers, local authorities and developers. Ongoing work by NRW in the Clwyd and Elwy catchments has shown that different solutions are more effective in the different catchments and in these areas various different methods of natural flood risk management have been used within one catchment.

The Welsh Government recognises that our sewerage and drainage infrastructures will be increasingly under pressure from climate change effects and a growing population. We support the SuDS approach as a sustainable and collaborative method for reducing the impacts of these pressures and we will be publishing non-statutory SuDS Standards later in the year.

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English Enquiry Line 0300 0603300
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0300 0604400
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Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)
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We have been able to provide support to one of the schemes in the Rainscape project in Llanelli by contributing over £600,000 of funding from the European Regional Development Fund. Rainscape provides new, innovative solutions to managing the amount of surface water entering our sewers.

I am also aware of Greener Grangetown which is a partnership involving Cardiff City Council, Dwr Cymru and NRW. Other local authorities may wish to follow its progress and may even consider adopting its framework as a possible exemplar of flood management practice. I would therefore suggest that the Petitioner contacts other Welsh local authorities to raise awareness of it in order that they can consider such an initiative as part of their urban planning proposals and designs.

Getting officers out on the ground is a good means of advocating woodland creation and better management of existing woods and we will consider supporting this proposal during the core grant funding decision process.

We also fully support and wish to encourage projects that have a joined-up approach (such as the Pontbren project). By working in partnership, land owners and managers can maximise the potential of their land by creating new woodlands for their multiple benefits – wildlife habitats, improved business opportunities, renewable energy sources and of course, where appropriate, a means of reducing water run-off during heavy rain and flooding.

The Welsh Government continues to work with its stakeholders and the forestry sector to encourage proposals for new and innovative ways to increase woodland creation and it continues to be a priority in our Woodlands for Wales forestry strategy.

The response to Glastir Woodland Creation to date has been very positive and the Expressions of Interest applications support this. I am confident that given its ethos as a cross-cutting agri-environment and forestry scheme, the Glastir tree planting options such as strategic planting against water run-off, the creation of riparian strips and new hedgerow planting can make a contribution to flood prevention.

In summary therefore, there is not a single solution that can be applied in all cases, certain proposals such as tree planting, may not always be the most effective choice or provide the greatest benefit when compared to other flood risk management methods. Proposals must always therefore be considered in what is best for the location and what the most sustainable means of achieving them are.

Yours sincerely



Carl Sargeant AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol
Minister for Natural Resources

Agenda Item 4.3

P-04-550 Planning Powers

Petition wording:

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to investigate how devolved planning powers could be used to bring vacant or derelict sites of land into beneficial use".

We are especially concerned that vacant or derelict sites like the former Kwik Save site in St Mellons, Cardiff can become a blight upon communities and attract anti-social behaviour.

We wish the investigation to consider whether current powers to take action against landowners of vacant or derelict land are adequate, including the potential to compel owners to take action at their own expense to remove eyesores or derelict structures.

We call for an investigation to take place before the proposed Planning Bill is passed by the Assembly.

Petition raised by: St Mellons Action Group

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 13 May 2014

Number of signatures: 41

Carl Sargeant AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol
Minister for Natural Resources



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-550
Ein cyf/Our ref CS/00870/15

William Powell AM
Chair Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
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committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

1ST July 2015

Dear Bill

Thank you for your letter passing on the views of the petitioner Mr Payne of the St. Mellons Action Group in relation to my previous response to the above petition.

My view remains that section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 provides local planning authorities with sufficient powers to tackle the condition of land that is having an adverse effect on their area.

Since my previous reply to you, the Planning (Wales) Bill has been scrutinised by the National Assembly for Wales. The provisions in the Bill relating to appeals against the notices served under section 215 have, in my view, been strengthened. In future, once the bill receives Royal Assent, appeals against unsightly land notices will be dealt with by the Planning Inspectorate rather than magistrate courts. This will enhance consistency in the making and determination of these appeals with enforcement appeals.

Failure to comply with a notice remains a matter for the Courts. The offence is punishable by a fine of up to £1000 and up to £300 every day the requirements of the notice remain unfulfilled after the initial conviction.

I am unable to comment on individual cases to avoid prejudicing any later role the Welsh Ministers may have. It is for the local planning authority to determine what, if any, action is required to maintain land in its area in a clean and tidy condition, using the appropriate legislative tools available.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C. Sargeant', written in a cursive style.

Carl Sargeant AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol
Minister for Natural Resources

Agenda Item 4.4

P-04-623 Improve the Provision of Disabled-friendly Housing in Wales'

Petition wording

We the undersigned call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to take action to ensure that all new homes in Wales are built to fully meet all the Welsh Housing Quality Standards ensuring they are as comprehensive as Lifetime Home Standards, with at least 10 per cent of new homes built to full wheelchair accessibility standards.

Organisation: Leonard Cheshire Disability

Lead petitioner: Rhian Stangroom-Teel

First considered by the Committee:

Number of signatures: 788 online signatures.



Leonard Cheshire Disability
66 South Lambeth Road
London SW8 1RL

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F 020 3242 0250

www.leonardcheshire.org

William Powell AM
Chair Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel,
Cardiff Bay,
CF99 1NA

24 June 2015

Dear William,

P-04-623 Improve the Provision of Disabled Friendly housing in Wales

Thank you for your correspondence dated 11th June 2015, inviting Leonard Cheshire to provide further comment on the specific points raised in the Minister for Natural Resources letter to the Committee in response to our petition. We have focussed on three of the Minister's points in particular:

- "Our national planning policy statement, Planning Policy Wales (PPW), encourages local planning authorities to facilitate sustainable residential environments;"
- "Our current planning policy and guidance provides Local Planning Authorities with the flexibility to respond to identified need;" and
- "I would need to be convinced as to how the quota system for wheelchair dwellings the petition calls for would match provision with demand"

We have given a response to these points below, along with our observations on the health impacts of inaccessible homes.

"Our national planning policy statement, Planning Policy Wales (PPW), encourages local planning authorities to facilitate sustainable residential environments."

We are grateful that the Welsh Government's current planning policy and guidance encourages local planning authorities to facilitate sustainable residential environments by promoting 'barrier free' housing developments. We also note that

Technical Advice Note 12: Design highlights the importance of meeting existing and future needs and refers to Lifetime Home standards as an example of such.

Unfortunately, we know that a significant proportion of Welsh homes do not meet the goals set out in these guidance documents. They cannot be adapted at all, or can only be adapted to include features such as stair lifts, grab rails or a wet room at significant cost, while for hundreds of thousands of others these adaptations are simply impossible.

Critically:

- Almost three quarters (72%) of people with a mobility impairment in Wales report that they live in a home without a properly accessible front door.¹ This means many people struggling to get by in homes that don't fully meet their needs, as well as meaning that of the hundreds of people who acquire a mobility impairment every year, many will have to move house or risk becoming trapped in their own home;
- More than half (54%) of people with a mobility impairment in Wales say they do not have stairs big enough for a stair-lift to be fitted;
- In 2008, the 'Living in Wales' survey found that 22% of households including someone with a long-term illness, disability, or infirmity, had adaptation needs that had not been met.²

These statistics are reflected in the personal experiences of those waiting for a disabled friendly home.

¹ The Hidden Housing Crisis – Leonard Cheshire Disability

² The Living in Wales Survey 2008

Case study 1: Ruby and Cody

Ruby lives in Barry in South Wales with her son Cody, who has the degenerative muscle condition Duchenne muscular dystrophy. Cody currently finds it difficult getting up the stairs on his own, and this will only get worse as time goes on and his illness progresses.

Ruby told us:

“I’m very worried about what will happen if we have to stay here once Cody has to use a wheelchair. He won’t be able to sleep in his bedroom, or use the bathroom privately, and the impact on his life, our lives, will be enormous.

“There are new developments being built in Barry, but neither the council nor private developers are building enough homes to cater for families like us who need them. We are gold priority on the Homes 4U list (the local housing association), but there’s not a single available home in the area which is suitable.

“The life expectancy for someone living with Duchenne is only 27 years. Our precious time together shouldn’t be wasted struggling to get out of the front door, or get down the stairs, we should be able to enjoy our lives together while we can.”

In 2014, Ruby launched her own Change.org petition, asking that the Vale of Glamorgan to build her a home suitable to meet needs of her disabled son. Her petition is accessible at: <https://www.change.org/p/correspondence-carl-sargeant-vale-council-help-us-find-a-home-suitable-for-our-son-cody-create-more-homes-for-families-with-disabled-children>

We also know that Local Authorities have very limited information about the size of the problems they are facing.

Of the 14 authorities in Wales who responded to our questions, none had analysed the additional costs of inadequate housing to health and social care. When we asked about housing plans, of the 11 local authorities who responded, a third (36%) either had no housing plan at all, or their plan made no reference to disability.

Further, only 55% of Local Authorities in Wales have an Accessible Housing Register, or similar system. This suggests that almost half the Local Authorities in Wales would struggle to answer a basic question about where disabled friendly housing in their authority actually is.

These facts lead to one inescapable conclusion: it is not encouragement which is needed.

It is direction.

Case study 2: Laura and Blisse

Laura's daughter Blisse is 5 years old and was born with Periventricular Nodular Heteropia and Polymicrogyria. Her conditions mean that she is life limited and the family have access to the local children's hospice for children who are not expected to live past 19. Blisse suffers with severe epilepsy, having almost constant mini-seizures and breathing difficulties. She requires 24hr constant care, including medication being administered during the night, and therefore one of Blisse's parents must sleep in the same room as her.

The room in which Blisse and Laura spend their lives is small, and crowded by the equipment that Blisse requires.

Laura told us "Currently we exist at home, it's a living hell. Blisse is trapped in one room. We have no space in the house to spend time as a family, so we exist separately. My own health is failing and I am unable to lift Blisse safely: as she grows it will get to a point where I will not be able to lift her at all.

As our bathroom is upstairs I have to carry Blisse for her to be bathed, and as she is peg fed it is vital for her to be washed daily. We have been on the Vale of Glamorgan's accessible housing list for almost five years, because the house we need doesn't exist. I am desperate, our family's situation is desperate and we need action now, not in another five years from now.'

The home they are living in was built to WHQS. However, it was not built to full wheelchair accessibility standards. As such, they require a ground level extension, track hoisting throughout an open plan style living area, and a specially adapted bathroom with a full size bath that can accommodate two people working either side of the bath (as Blisse has fits if she is placed in a shower).

In order to meet the needs of people like Cody and Blisse, specific, national direction is required.

TAN 12 should explicitly direct planning authorities to normally require that all homes are built to Lifetime Home standards.

Disabled-friendly homes should not simply be an illustrative example of how 'barrier free' housing developments can potentially be achieved, but rather should be an expected standard and a plan for delivering them.

"Our current planning policy and guidance provides Local Planning Authorities with the flexibility to respond to identified need;"

Leonard Cheshire Disability would argue that the approach we suggest would not impact on flexibility. Homes already need to be built to certain access standards, and we believe that Wales can take a lead in strengthening these existing requirements to better meet the needs of disabled and older people. Increasing the quality and adaptability of homes should not equate to reducing flexibility.

We would also argue that the current flexibility in the system is not yet delivering the homes that disabled people need. Strengthening existing approaches should help to ensure that flexibility remains in the system, but the overall quality and accessibility of properties is driven up.

Additionally, our own dialogue with councillors indicates that a number of Local Authorities might actually welcome direction on this matter.

A national requirement for houses to normally be built to Lifetime Home standards would provide them with certainty in negotiations with housing developers, who currently identify and exploit flexibilities in a local authorities' approaches to planning.

Direction would also ensure that individual local authorities would not have to feel that they were 'going it alone' by insisting on such standards, with a risk that they may lose property developers to neighbouring areas.

"I would need to be convinced as to how the quota system for wheelchair dwellings the petition calls for would match provision with demand"

For clarity, we are calling for 10% of new builds to be built as wheelchair accessible homes because we know that for many years, demand for such homes has significantly outstripped supply.

The Habinteg Housing Association and London South Bank University's 2010 report 'Mind the Step: An estimation of housing need among wheelchair users in England,' report notably estimated there to be a 78,300 shortage of wheelchair accessible homes in England. In Wales, it is estimated that 7,000 disabled people are currently on housing waiting lists.³

The Habinteg report also notes that analysis based on the Survey of English Housing 2007/08 shows that there were around 600,000 wheelchair users in England, living in some 590, 000 households. This equates to 2.8% of all households.

Our 10% quota is therefore not solely about meeting the needs of new wheelchair users. Rather, our 10% quota is also about promptly closing the significant gap between the small number of wheelchair accessible homes which are currently available, due to historic building patterns, and the much higher demand for them within the existing population.

As such, we would anticipate that the size of a quota would be adjusted at such time as the supply of wheelchair accessible stock had equalled demand. Clearly, this would also require the Welsh Government and local authorities to be in a position to accurately monitor levels of supply within Wales. The use of accessible housing registers across Wales could also help to ensure that properties are effectively matched to those who need them.

For clarity, this is a matter for all forms of housing: owned, rented and social. The Habinteg report estimated that around 55% of wheelchair user households are owner-occupiers, 39% are social housing tenants, and 6% are private tenants.

The health impacts of inaccessible homes

We would also like to draw the Committee's attention to the benefit of improving the provision of disabled friendly homes would have for the NHS in Wales, as well

³ No Place Like Home, Leonard Cheshire Disability, 2014

social services provision. We know that inaccessible homes also have costs in terms of NHS staff-time.

A poll of 1004 GPs across the UK in January 2014 indicated that:

- 45,000 hours of GP time⁴ had been used up each month dealing with disabled or older people who had suffered injuries, illness or other health problems because of problems with their home;
- 95% of GPs have at least one patient they see because of problems with their inaccessible homes;
- 2.2% of GPs had more than 20 appointments related to inaccessible homes in the last month; and
- 1.5% of GPs spend more than 1/5 of their time (around a day a week) dealing with this issue.
- On average GPs say that 4.1% of their total caseload is down to health problems caused by inaccessible homes.

We also know that 96% of occupational therapists agree that adaptations reduce individuals' need for social care. ⁵

If more disabled homes were being properly built to Lifetime Home Standards, efficiencies would be realised within the Health and Social Care budgets, as well as freeing more GP time to deal with clinical problems rather than housing related issues. There would also be significant reduction in the need for, and costs of, Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs), which would make significant savings to the Local Authority budgets.

Occupational Therapists working in 2 different Local Authorities which have prioritised building to Lifetime Home criteria, and which are working to update their existing stock, have indicated to us that there has been a corresponding reduction in the need for DFGs, resulting in significant underspends.

There are also concrete examples of the principles of our petition being put into practice. A project undertaken by Cardiff Accessible Homes may be of particular

⁴ On average GPs reported having 4.75 appointments related to inaccessible housing every month. According to the BMA there are around 47,000 NHS GPs practising across the UK. Average GP appointment times are 12 minutes.

⁵ The College of Occupational Therapists carried out a survey with occupational therapists with a specialism in housing in March 2015, which received 104 responses.

interest to the Committee, and we would be happy to facilitate a visit, if that would assist the Committee in their consideration of our petition.

The 'Bungalows in the Sky' are the development of high rise units in Butetown, Cardiff, which offer freedom for people who would otherwise not have been able to access their homes, community and school or work.

These units allow single-level open plan living, of the kind ordinarily limited to a conventional bungalow, using an existing site. Cardiff Accessible Homes were offered 13 units at this complex, comprising of 10x1 bed ground floor flats, and 3x3 bed 'Bungalows in the Sky.' They worked closely with the development team over two years to make best use of the units. The scheme includes a large health centre which all tenants who reside at the scheme have the opportunity to use, as well as a media centre, which includes a cinema, meeting rooms and conference suite. The following link outlines the whole development in Loudon

Square: <http://www.regenwales.org/upload/pdf/110113034035Case%20Study.pdf>

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information, or if the Committee would find it helpful to meet with me or any of our case studies.

Yours sincerely,

Rhian Stangroom-Teel

Rhian Stangroom-Teel

Policy and Public Affairs (Wales)

Leonard Cheshire Disability

Telephone: 07815 601445

Email: rhian.stangroom-teel@leonardcheshire.org

Agenda Item 4.5

P-04-617 Stop the Wholesale Hiving off of Public Libraries to the Voluntary Sector

Petition wording

We call on the Deputy Minister for Culture to accept, with immediate effect, recommendation III of the Expert Library Review of Public Libraries in Wales 2014 (Proposed changes to public library services should only be progressed following the production of costed options). Furthermore, he should now advise all local authorities in Wales that this requirement will be effective for proposed changes announced after the date of publication of the Expert Review (22 October 2014) as well as proposals announced before that date, but where a period of public consultation ends after 22 October 2014. This action is required to halt the flood of proposals by the Vale of Glamorgan and other local authorities in Wales to hive off our Public Libraries to the voluntary sector, without giving due consideration to alternative options.

Petitioner : Adam Riley – Save Rhoose Library

First considered by the Committee:

Number of Signatures:: 66

Ken Skates AC / AM
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Diwylliant, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth
Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-617
Ein cyf/Our ref KS/00767/15

William Powell AM
Chair - petitions committee
Ty Hywel
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committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

29 June 2015

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter of 18 June regarding the petition 'Stop the hiving off of public libraries to the voluntary sector' with further comments from the original petitioner.

I note the petitioner's concern surrounding the non-statutory nature of the recently issued *Guidance on community managed libraries and the statutory provision of public library services*, and that the Welsh Public Library Standards are also only guidelines. My officials have advised me that both would require a change in law or a new Act to replace the 1964 Public Libraries Act to make such guidance part of the statutory nature of public libraries.

The petitioner refers to the Welsh Government's responsibility towards public libraries. As part of the 1964 Act it is my duty to "superintend" public library services in Wales and this is achieved through the Welsh Public Library Standards and my officials continue to monitor the ongoing changes to library provision by local authorities.

Yours ever

Ken Skates AC / AM
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Diwylliant, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth
Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism

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William Powell AM
Assembly Member for Mid & West Wales
Chair – Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
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CF99 1NA

Dear William

Re: Petition P-04-617: Stop the Wholesale Hiving Off of Public Libraries to the Voluntary Sector

Thank you for your recent letter, dated 16th June 2015, to the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) in relation to the above petition your committee has received. I am pleased to respond to you on behalf of WLGA as the Association's Spokesperson for Culture, Sport and Tourism.

For over 150 years, our public libraries have played a central role in the fabric of communities throughout Wales. Our libraries allow us to improve literacy, attainment and learn new digital skills; they provide us with free access to knowledge and information, regardless of background and wealth; they play a strong role towards tackling poverty, supporting health and wellbeing – I know I speak for all of Wales' local government leaders when I say that their benefits as cultural and educational hubs can never be underestimated in the real difference they make to the lives of people and communities.

You will of course be aware that under the *Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964*, local authorities in Wales, as public library authorities, have a statutory duty to provide a "comprehensive and efficient library service" for all citizens wishing to make use of; a duty to which all Welsh local authorities guard seriously and exercise conscientiously.

Although the WLGA cannot comment specifically on service delivery proposals by an individual authority as referred to within the petition, I would like to remind the Petitions Committee of the severe funding challenges our local authorities in Wales are facing – funding challenges which were acutely recognised in both the Assembly's Communities, Equalities & Local Government (CELG) Committee *Inquiry into Public Libraries in Wales* and in the most recent *Expert Review of Public Libraries in Wales*, which was commissioned by the Welsh Government back in December 2013.

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This financial year (2015-16), we have seen throughout Wales a reduction of 4.5% in the local government settlement, in addition to a 3.5% reduction in last year's (2014-15) settlement; this is of course on top of the prospect of a further reduction in public spending in the coming years ahead.

In light of on-going budget pressures and year-on-years cuts, local authorities, not just in Wales but throughout the UK have had to respond accordingly to these challenges by re-examining current "in-house" delivery models, along with exploring new and innovate ways of delivering public services, such as through charitable trusts and community asset transfers, as a way of protecting services without compromising on their quality and value.

Although the WLGA recognise that these challenging times do call for new approaches when managing, delivering and sustaining both our statutory and discretionary service areas, the Association does believe that there should not be a pan-Wales "one model fits all" approach, and that each local authority is, in consultation with members of the public, best placed to decide which service delivery method is most appropriate to successfully meet the needs and expectations of the local community. It is also important to recognise that the way people are using their local libraries is constantly changing, particularly with advances in digital information and technology.

With regards to the *Expert Review of Public Libraries in Wales 2014* report, local government in Wales has broadly welcomed the report and recommendations, and work with key stakeholders, including Welsh Government and the Society of Chief Libraries Wales (SCLW), is already underway towards implementing many of the key recommendations outlined.

Certainly, best practice surrounding any potential service delivery change does consist of open and transparent public consultation, fully costed options, identifying appropriate timescales, completing relevant impact assessments, along with assessing potential opportunities for collaboration and co-location with other services (as outlined by *Recommendation III* of the report); it is the view of the WLGA that such best practice and guidance is already being used and followed by all Welsh local authorities in assessing potential future models of delivery for local library services.

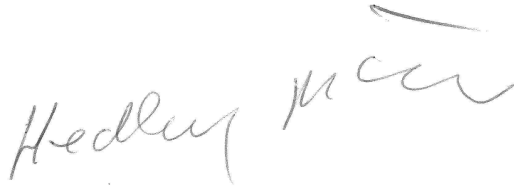
With reference to the petition itself, the Association would point out that voluntary sector involvement in running our local libraries, commonly referred to community managed libraries (CML), is not a new phenomenon.

As the Deputy Minister's written response mentions, the WLGA have worked closely with Welsh Government officials in CyMAL in developing new guidance for local authorities to voluntarily adopt (as outlined by *Recommendations VIII & IX* of the report) in addressing the role of community managed libraries as part of a statutory service provision under the under the *Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964*; I am pleased to say that this guidance was recently noted by local authorities for an immediate 12 month pilot period at our last WLGA Co-ordinating Committee meeting in May 2015.

Can I therefore reassure both the original petitioner and the Petitions Committee that local government in Wales remains wholeheartedly committed to continuing to deliver on providing a comprehensive and efficient local library service in all corners of Wales for the benefit of communities and future generations to come.

If you, or members of the Petitions Committee should require any further information from myself and the WLGA in relation to this petition or our public libraries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Hedley McCarthy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Cllr Hedley McCarthy BA (Hons)

WLGA Spokesperson for Culture, Sport & Tourism
Leader of Blaenau Gwent CBC

Agenda Item 4.6

P-04-363 Town Centre Improvement Scheme for Fishguard

Petition wording:

We, the undersigned, request that the National Assembly supports the call on the Welsh Government to work with Pembrokeshire County Council to ensure that investment is made in a Town Centre Improvement Scheme for Fishguard, including pedestrian and traffic management measures. Such an Improvement Scheme must improve the viability and sustainability of the Town and make it fully accessible for all residents and visitors, including those with mobility and other disability needs.

Petition raised by: Councillor Bob Kilmister

Date petition first considered by Committee: 7 February 2012

Number of signatures: 1,042

Edwina Hart MBE CStJ AC / AM
Gweinidog yr Economi, Gwyddoniaeth a Thrafnidiaeth
Minister for Economy, Science and Transport



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-363
Ein cyf/Our ref EH/02841/15

William Powell AM
Chair - petitions committee

SeneddPetitions@Assembly.Wales

2 July 2015

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter of 18 June regarding the petition for a town centre improvement scheme in Fishguard.

We are currently finalising projects to be taken forward this year and will be considering a project to change the existing parking layout at Golden Mile to provide a single coach drop off/ pick up point for day visitors to Fishguard. We are also working with the Fishguard and Goodwick Chamber of Trade and Tourism and Fishguard and Goodwick Town Council on their plans to visually enhance the town.

With regard to congestion in the centre of Fishguard, any scheme proposed for Chimneys Link will be led by Pembrokeshire County Council. The Council will also be responsible for ensuring that appropriate funding is in place for such a scheme to progress.

Edwina Hart

Agenda Item 4.7

P-04-416: North-South Rail Services

Petition wording:

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to work with Arriva Trains to increase the number of direct express rail services between Holyhead and Cardiff.

Petition raised by: Neil Taylor

Date petition first considered by Committee: 2 October 2012

Number of signatures: 19



Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-416
Ein cyf/Our ref EH/02831/15

William Powell AM
Chair
Petitions Committee

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

2 July 2015

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter of 18 June enclosing the petitioner's further comments regarding North-South rail services.

The pattern of commuting services for North Wales is oriented towards travel eastwards in the morning and westwards in the evening reflecting passenger demand. That said, there are commuting options available for passengers travelling in both directions.

We continue to invest in additional services and capacity for North Wales, which include benefits for commuters. Network Rail are due to complete the £44m North South Journey Time Reduction scheme this year which enable faster journeys between Cardiff and North Wales.

There have been a number of timetable enhancements in recent years that have also improved the overall provision of train capacity in North Wales. In relation to the additional capacity provided by the recent introduction of the loco-hauled services, this is not limited to those services alone but has also enabled longer trains to be deployed on fourteen further services by a related cascade of other rolling stock.

I understand that stakeholders will have aspirations for further enhancements to services. I will continue to consider these, but will of course have to be mindful of budgetary consideration and, increasingly, the shortage of suitable available trains currently available.

We are engaging with rail user groups about their views on further enhancements, particularly with relation to specifying the next Wales and Borders franchise and modernisation of the North Wales network.

Edwina Hart

Agenda Item 4.8

P-04-514 A Welsh clean coal and/or renewable energy power station instead of the proposed Wylfa B nuclear plant at Anglesey

Petition wording:

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to work with the new owners of Wylfa B, Hitachi, to encourage the use of clean Welsh coal or our other plentiful supplies of viable technologies/resources instead of a dangerous nuclear power plant.

In a report on clean coal technology from the 2010 XXI World Energy Congress in Montreal Canada, Hitachi state that they are developing a full portfolio of new clean coal technologies aimed at further efficiency improvement, 90% CO₂ reduction, and near-zero emissions of other pollutants. As world leaders in clean coal technology, why don't Hitachi work alongside the Welsh Government to implement this technology at Wylfa B instead of an archaic and poisonous nuclear plant station like the failed Fukushima plants they helped to build?

Additional information:

Nuclear plants are a dangerous and uneconomical method of producing electricity, with a short unviable operational time span which costs tax payers tens of billions in development, subsidies and decommissioning costs. As well as being vulnerable to attack and natural disasters as seen in Fukushima, nuclear power has known health risks. A major German government report showed increased rates of childhood cancers and leukaemia around nuclear sites. With no known method of disposing of the nuclear waste, it will also contaminate the planet for thousands of years.

Welsh clean coal, gas, hydrogen, solar, wave, tidal, hydro, Maglev wind, geo thermal, refuse incineration, anaerobic digestion, biomass or a combination of all of these could be implemented at Anglesey and elsewhere instead of nuclear power. Ynys Mon's PAWB manifesto states that, whilst the current Wylfa only has up to 600 workers, up to 3650 new jobs could be found by developing local renewable energy projects alone.

Petition raised by: Sovereign Wales

Date petition first considered by Committee: 26 November 2013

Number of signatures: 104

Edwina Hart MBE CStJ AC / AM
Gweinidog yr Economi, Gwyddoniaeth a Thrafnidiaeth
Minister for Economy, Science and Transport



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-514
Ein cyf/Our ref EH/02600/15

William Powell AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

17 June 2015

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter of 5 June to the Minister for Natural Resources regarding Petition P-04-514. I am replying in view of my portfolio responsibilities.

As outlined in the Energy Wales Statement, published on 20 April, energy is one of our most important economic imperatives and the cost and security of energy continues to be one of our priorities. Fossil fuel energy generation continues to have an important role in ensuring security of supply. Carbon capture and storage (CCS) will be key to ensuring fossil fuels have a longer term role in the future energy mix.

CCS technology has not yet been successfully commercialised. We are supportive of demonstration projects, such as the one being undertaken at Aberthaw, which is furthering our understanding of both reducing emissions from coal fired power stations and the viability of running commercial scale carbon capture operations at power plants. My officials will continue to monitor CCS technologies including the Peterhead CCS project in Scotland and the White Rose project in Yorkshire, which will help provide a clearer picture on future commercial scale CCS and the prospects for potential deployment of the technology in Wales.

With regard to the development of Wylfa Newydd, we want to ensure that Wales maximises opportunities and benefits associated with nuclear related investment in Wales and beyond and the successful and timely delivery of this project is one of our key priorities. Hitachi's investment will help enable Wales to effect a low carbon transition and might enable access to future low carbon developments the company may undertake.

In addition, whilst not CCS, Mitsubishi Hitachi Power Systems Europe GmbH, the successor to Hitachi Power Europe GmbH, are working on a pilot project in Germany which would convert carbon dioxide from a coal power plant.

Edwina Hart

P-04-514 W A Welsh clean coal andor renewable energy power station instead of the proposed Wylfa b nuclear plant at Anglesey – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 18.06.15

Dear all at the panel,

I write in response to Mrs Edwina Hart's letter dated June 17th 2015 in regard to Petition number P-04-514 / 'A clean coal power station for Wylfa Newydd instead of a nuclear one'. I'll try and make my reply as brief as possible.

Mrs Hart is incorrect again in her statement that “CCS (Carbon Capture Storage) technology has not yet been successfully commercialised”. Alun Davies previously made the same incorrect statement as the former Minister. This New Scientist article reports on a new retro fitted CCS plant in Canada (Boundary Dam) that is the first commercial station to become a working coal fired power station, with 90% of its CO2 emissions captured:

<http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg22129593.300-trailblazing-power-plant-is-first-to-bury-its-carbon.html#.U6HS0bEhUdV>

The turbines/generator for the plant are supplied by General Electric and Hitachi.

Kemper County power station in Mississippi will soon follow to become the second CCS (Carbon Capture Storage) coal power station. The station is scheduled to open in the first half of 2016:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kemper_Project

In other words, Carbon Carbon Storage is up and running and is commercially viable.

According to this report (attached) by Hitachi, last updated in 2014, their next generation power plants with CCS will enable carbon storage and near-zero emissions within the next decade

http://www.hitachi.com/rev/pdf/2010/r2010_03_111.pdf

This below extract can be found in their conclusion:

"Hitachi's next generation ultrasupercritical power plants with CCS will

enable carbon storage and near-zero emissions within the next decade"

Other brief point why the proposals for a nuclear Wylfa newydd are dangerous and unviable:

* The German Government, after their research showed increased rates of childhood cancers and leukaemia around nuclear sites, especially in children under 5, is closing all its nuclear power stations by 2022. The Welsh Government has a duty of care to follow suit and not risk the lives of children and people in Ynys Mon, the rest of Wales and beyond.

* Nuclear plants are a dangerous and uneconomical method of producing electricity, with a short unviable operational time span which costs tax payers tens of billions in development, subsidies and decommissioning costs. As well as being vulnerable to attack and natural disasters as seen in Fukushima, nuclear power has known health risks. With no known method of disposing of the nuclear waste, it will also contaminate the planet for thousands of years.

* Ynys Mon's PAWB manifesto states that, whilst the proposed Wylfa Newydd would provide 1,000 jobs once it begins working, up to 3650 new jobs could be found by developing local renewable energy projects alone as an alternative to a nuclear plant. This before even considering a clean coal power plant.

* The DECC has a £1 billion pound fund to support developing commercial Carbon Capture Storage and it has been shown that CCS technology works commercially. The Welsh Government and Hitachi therefore have a clear duty to acknowledge that there is no need for a nuclear plant at Wylfa and that there are better, cheaper and safer options such as clean coal and renewable energy options.

* Even if a person is in favour of nuclear power, the proposed plans for a Wylfa Newydd are flawed as they would be using the antiquated nuclear fission method of producing power. Other nuclear technologies such as nuclear fusion (as opposed to fission) are far safer, more effective and produce next to no waste. Nuclear fission energy production such as that proposed for Ynys Mon is not a renewable energy and will produce a vast amount of toxic waste which nobody knows what to do with. The waste also creates astronomical containment costs and serious health and pollution problems for present and future generations. It goes without saying that

the Welsh government has an unequivocal duty of care to the people of Wales and beyond to avoid this.

The Welsh Government can't avoid its duty of care and can't therefore allow this new nuclear site to go ahead in Ynys Mon. As I'm hoping you will agree, it therefore follows that the Welsh Assembly also has a duty of care to hold the Welsh Government to account over this to ensure it cannot go ahead with these proposals for the reasons given above.

Thank you again for taking the time to read this,

Sincerely,

G.Meredith

Highly Efficient Power Stations with Carbon Capture

Christian Bergins, Dr. Eng.
Song Wu, Ph. D.

OVERVIEW: Worldwide, coal currently contributes over 40% of electricity generation and its share is expected to increase steadily over the coming decades. The continued dominance of coal in the global energy structure and growing concerns about climate change necessitate accelerated development and deployment of new technologies for clean and efficient coal unitization. Coal-fired power plants with CCS are widely expected to be an important part of a sensible future technology portfolio to achieve the overall global CO₂ reductions required for stabilizing atmospheric CO₂ concentration and global warming.

INTRODUCTION

AS a global technology and equipment provider for complete thermal power plants, Hitachi is actively developing CO₂ (carbon dioxide) capture technologies for coal power with the following approach:

- (1) Development of two flexible CO₂ capture processes utilizing advanced amine-based PCC (post-combustion capture) and oxyfuel combustion technologies
- (2) Design of optimized heat integration of the processes
- (3) Total plant re-optimization involving the boiler, turbine, AQCS (air quality control system), and CCS (CO₂ capture and sequestration) system
- (4) Pilot scale evaluation of the technologies
- (5) Capture-ready design of new power stations as a first step toward enabling future CCS addition and sustained operation in a carbon-constrained world

ADVANCED ULTRASUPERCRITICAL POWER PLANT

To offset the expected loss in efficiency resulting from carbon capture, further improvement of the power plant is necessary. The most effective way to increase power plant efficiency is to increase the live steam temperature. The state-of-the-art boiler materials of today limit the boiler outlet steam temperature to approximately 600°C. A step change is required to further increase the steam temperature. That is, the 700°C boiler of the future will need to use nickel-based alloys for the superheaters, turbine, and some parts of the waterwall. Hitachi has been involved in the associated R&D (research and development) and manufacturing testing since the beginning of this 700°C power plant concept in the 1990s in Europe. Similar development efforts were started in Japan years ago and Hitachi together with other suppliers and

utilities is driving forward the development.

Fig. 1⁽¹⁾ shows the key R&D programs performed since the mid-90s. In numerous publicly sponsored and privately financed programs all of the important components of the steam generator were qualified. Feasibility studies and basic engineering for 700°C power plants were carried out based on different steam generator types and different pressure ranges (THERMIE 1+2, NRW PP 700). Semi-finished products such as tubes and pipes were manufactured, welding procedures were tested, and laboratory testing of mechanical properties was performed. Superheater test loops exposed to real flue gas atmospheres have provided information about corrosion and oxidation behavior. Components such as superheater wall panels, superheater surfaces, headers, piping, and different types of welds were tested in the COMTES 700 Component Test Facility. Components with original

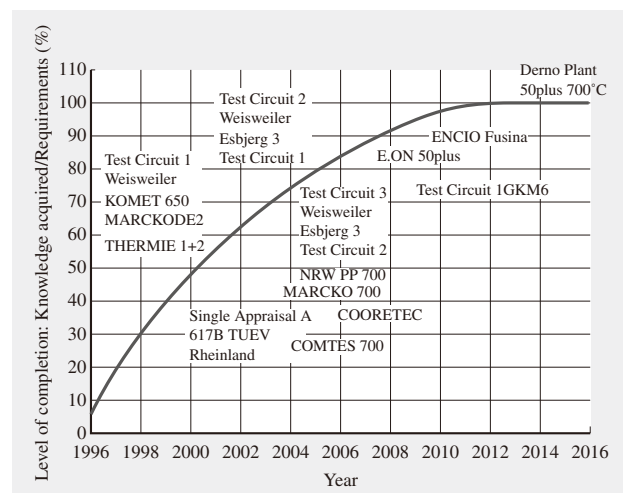


Fig. 1—Road to 700°C Technology in Europe. The know-how to construct demonstration plants will be available in the near future.

dimensions for a 500-MW demonstration plant such as membrane walls, superheater tubes with high wall thicknesses, HP (high pressure)-pipes, RH (reheat)-pipes, and different welds have been designed and fabricated using various manufacturing technologies. Even though there are still some open problems among the lessons learnt from the COMTES 700 test facility, sufficient knowledge of the manufacturing process has been gained and sufficient investigations into material qualifications have been completed that a demonstration plant could be ordered in the near future.

Hitachi Power Europe GmbH (HPE) actively participated in most of the projects, taking a leading role in material and manufacturing development for the nickel-based materials. These materials are needed in the upper part of the furnace walls and for superheater and reheater surfaces. Examples are given in Fig. 2. The photograph on the left shows an A617 membrane wall successfully welded and bended in HPE's workshop. Through this work, HPE gained the know-how to fabricate membrane walls for 700°C boilers. The photograph on the right of Fig. 2 shows a full-scale superheater bundle for a 700°C application. The bundle consists of Alloy 617B, Alloy 740, Sanicro 25, and HR3C tubes and was successfully tested for 30,000 hours in the COMTES 700 test plant. It represents an important part of HPE's experience in the manufacturing of pressure parts for the forthcoming 700°C technology.

PCC

Amine-based CO₂ separation is a leading technology expected to be available commercially within the next decade for large fossil-fueled power stations. However, the traditional CO₂ capture process utilizing conventional amine solvents is very energy intensive and is also susceptible to solvent degradation by O₂ (oxygen), SO_x (sulfur oxides), and NO_x (nitrogen oxides) in coal-fired flue gas, resulting in large operating costs. Therefore, concepts for improved AQCS have to be developed and proven. The development of amine systems that consume less energy and the recovery of waste heat are the most essential measures for further decreasing the efficiency penalty. These measures already have to be defined for new power stations, and the changed heat balance and necessary equipment for retrofits has to be pre-designed in advance as per the definition of capture-readiness because all new power stations in the EU must be capture-ready. Additionally, the technology has to be proven in pilot

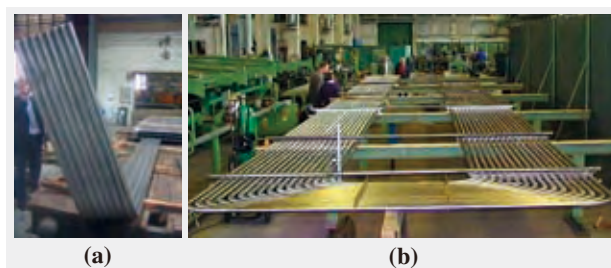


Fig. 2—Membrane Wall (a) and Superheater Panel Using Nickel-based Alloy (Alloy 617B)(b).

Hitachi Power Europe GmbH is working on the development of technologies required to construct 700°C-class boilers.



Fig. 3—Pilot Plant for PCC (post-combustion capture) Testing in Europe.

Testing is being undertaken in Europe using the flue gas from power plants.

and demonstration scale plants to be commercially available for new builds and retrofits in 2020.

For the PCC process, HPE has completed a 5-MWth pilot facility (see Fig. 3) for CO₂ capture based on amine absorption. It will be set up in cooperation with E.ON AG and GDF SUEZ at a power plant site in the Netherlands in mid-2010 and be subject to tests involving various scrubbing agents up to 2015. One of the pilot plant's assets is its transportability which allows it to be deployed to various plant sites. Moreover, because it is not limited to any specific scrubbing or amine solution, the operator is free to use their reagent of choice. In conjunction with German power companies and universities, HPE is also supporting the construction of a second mobile pilot plant for testing CO₂ scrubbing agents, which are not subject to protective rights, at a power plant in Duisburg.

Thanks to the system integration capabilities within the group (power plant boilers, turbines, air quality control systems, and CO₂ compression), HPE has developed overall plant technology which

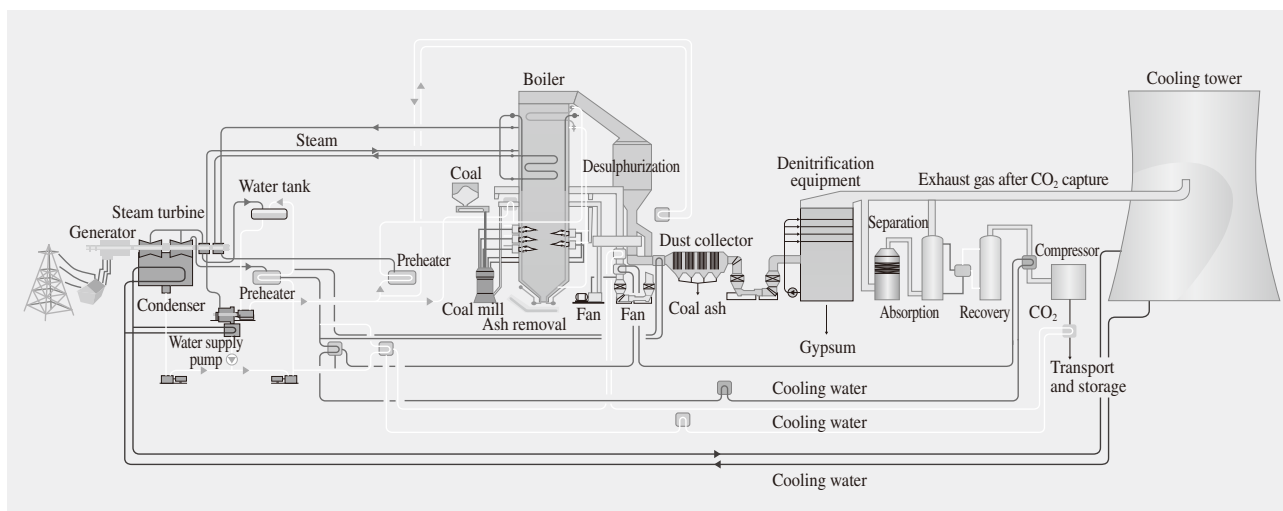


Fig. 4—Heat Integration of PCC.

It is anticipated that the thermal losses in 600°C-class boilers will be able to be reduced to 8% or less.

for future plants can cut the total efficiency loss from CO₂ capture to under 8% compared to 11% to 14% for today's commercial amine solvents with minimum integration. Fig. 4 shows the design of the heat integration and optimized flow scheme which can achieve an efficiency loss as low as 7.8% points for a 600°C power plant⁽²⁾.

As a part of the commercialization effort, Hitachi is actively pursuing opportunities for demonstration of CCS technologies, partnering with industry and government. In October 2009, the US DOE (Department of Energy) selected a CCS demonstration project run by Wolverine Power Supply Cooperative, Inc. (WPSCI) to be one of the ICCS (Industrial Carbon Capture and Storage) Phase 1 Projects. The project plans to demonstrate Hitachi's technology to capture 300,000 t of CO₂ per year (1,000 t/d on a 50-MWe slipstream) from a 600-MW power plant to be built near Rogers City, Michigan. The captured CO₂ will be sequestered through EOR (enhanced oil recovery) operations near the project site. The Wolverine project team includes WPSCI (the owner), Hitachi Power Systems America, Ltd. (CO₂ capture technology provider), Core Energy Group (EOR host), Burns and Roe (owner's engineer), and Western Michigan University (geology evaluation for CO₂ storage). Hitachi will provide an integrated CO₂ capture system and the advanced H3-1 amine-based solvent for the project.

In February 2010, Hitachi and SaskPower in Canada agreed to long-term cooperation in developing low-carbon energy technology including CCS. Hitachi was also selected to supply the steam turbine for the SaskPower Boundary Dam Integrated Carbon Capture

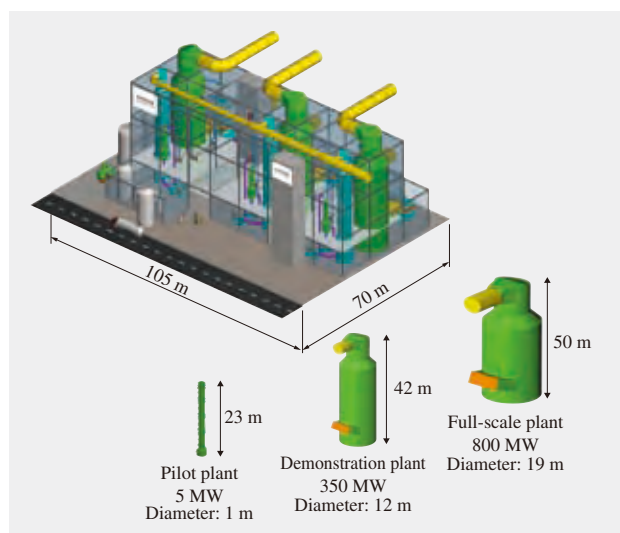


Fig. 5—Relative Sizes of Commercial-scale CO₂ Scrubbers.⁽²⁾ The technology has already progressed to the demonstration plant stage and Hitachi is working on scaling this up for full commercial use.

and Sequestration Demonstration Project, which will retrofit an existing unit to produce 115 MW of clean base-load electricity, while enhancing local oil production and reducing CO₂ emissions.

Scaling-up of the CO₂ capture system components has been investigated in detail under several ongoing projects for engineering and design study. Fig. 5 shows the absorber dimensions of different sizes and the layout of an 800-MWe CO₂ capture system.

OXYFUEL COMBUSTION

Oxyfuel combustion is another promising technology to enable CO₂ capture and sequestration for new and existing coal-fired power plants where the

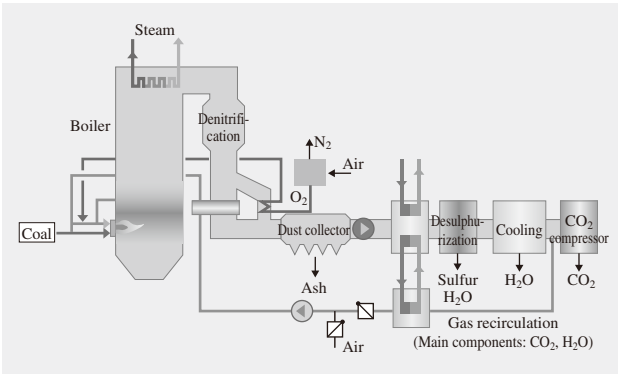


Fig. 6—Optimized Oxyfuel Process.⁽³⁾
 Pilot testing is planned in Europe to verify the underlying performance of oxyfuel boilers.

coal is burned with pure oxygen diluted by recycled flue gas resulting in highly concentrated CO₂ and some H₂O in the flue gas. Fig. 6 shows a block diagram of the oxyfuel process. To determine the impact on the process of using a totally different flue gas composition, Hitachi and others have been working on extensive development programs to commercialize oxyfuel combustion technology through design studies, laboratory scale experiments, CFD (computational fluid dynamics) modeling, as well as small and large pilot plant tests.

As for PCC, the immediate focus is to ensure that the coal-fired power stations commissioned in recent years and in the near future can be easily converted to oxyfuel for CCS operation. The development work to date has shown that existing state-of-the-art coal-fired power stations can be converted to oxyfuel combustion with minor changes to the plant water-steam cycle and other equipment, as shown in Fig. 6. The most important issue is to have space available inside and around the power station for the new equipment required for a CCS retrofit.

On the R&D side, studies of the basic technologies for oxyfuel combustion have been conducted over many years by Hitachi and others at various pilot-scale plants. In cooperation with universities and industrial partners, small- and medium-scale experiments have been performed to prove design models and correlations for combustion systems (see Fig. 7)^{(4), (5)}.

Valuable findings from the experimental studies have been implemented into the design models and programs for a variety of plant components that will be adopted to meet the new requirements under oxyfuel conditions. These findings have been applied to, for instance, the design of a new DS-T burner for firing dry fuels. This burner was successfully tested in a

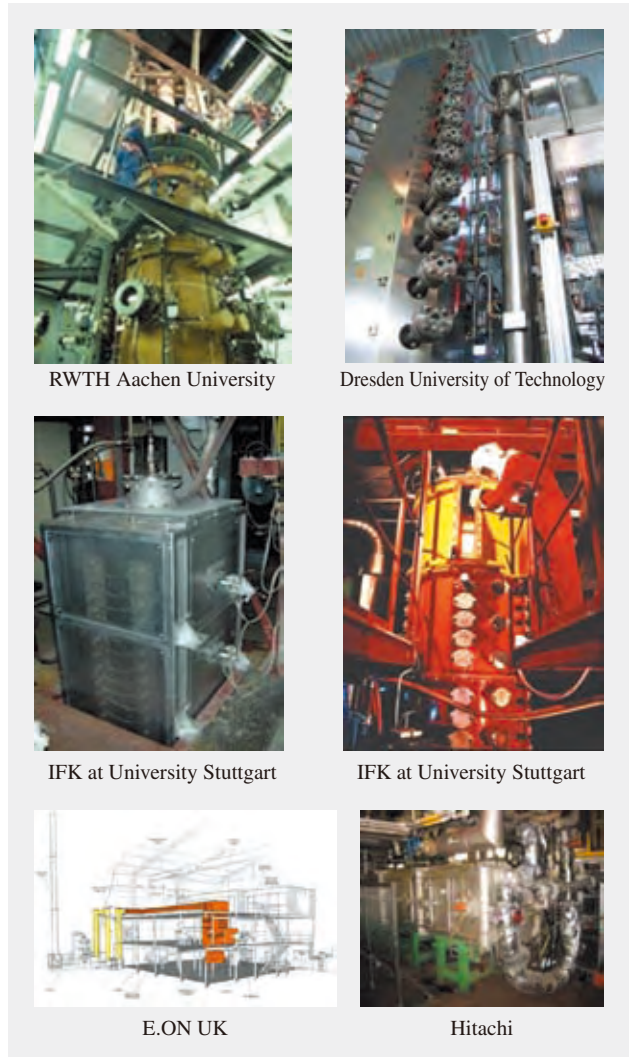


Fig. 7—Oxyfuel Test Rigs Used for Basic Investigations. Hitachi is working on basic research in conjunction with European universities and industry partners. (Images courtesy of P. Winandy, RWTH Aachen University, IFK (formerly IVD) at University Stuttgart, and E.ON UK.)

30-MWth experimental combustion facility under air combustion conditions in 2009 and 2010 in Europe. The fuels used were dry lignite, bituminous coal, and biomass (saw dust). The fact that stable combustion was maintained while meeting all relevant emission limits for all fuels tested is proof of the high flexibility of Hitachi’s technology (see Fig. 8).

Under a technology partnership with Vattenfall AB, the DS-T burner was successfully installed and commissioned at the Schwarze Pumpe oxyfuel pilot plant in Brandenburg, Germany in April 2010 and will be tested under various air and oxyfuel conditions⁽⁶⁾. The results from this testing will be used for the validation of the burner and firing system design by CFD (see Fig. 9) as well as for the further optimization



Fig. 8—DS-T Burner Flames for Different Fuels (Air Combustion).

Stable combustion is being achieved that complies with appropriate flue gas standards.

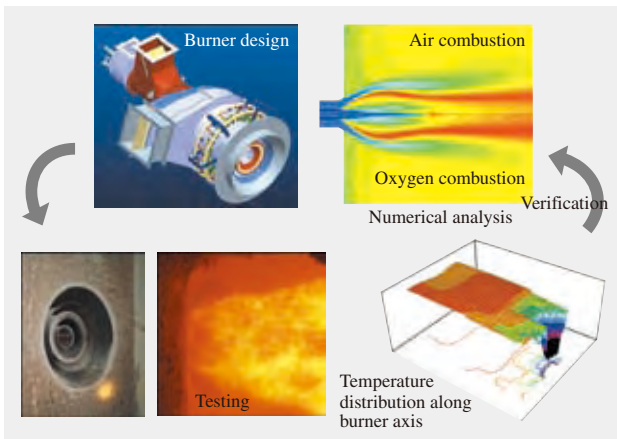


Fig. 9—Design and Validation of Firing System and Burner. The overall process will be optimized by numeric-analysis-based design and by validation through testing.

of the overall process to achieve lower emissions and higher efficiencies.

In conjunction with sister companies in the Hitachi Group, HPE has also been validating the design fundamentals and materials (including catalysts) for other major components such as the desulphurization and denitrification equipment for the oxyfuel flue gas, the boiler, and the CO₂ compressor. The findings will be implemented into the design of an oxyfuel demonstration plant which is currently being planned.

CONCLUSIONS

As an all-round provider of power generation technologies and equipment, Hitachi's aim is to find the optimum total-system solution for the highly efficient power stations of the future, both with and without CO₂ capture. By developing in parallel the technologies for improving efficiency through higher steam temperatures and for CO₂ capture processes such as post-combustion capture and oxyfuel combustion, Hitachi's next generation ultrasupercritical power plants with CCS will enable carbon storage and near-zero emissions within the next decade.

REFERENCES

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- (3) K. D. Tigges et al., "Oxyfuel Combustion Retrofits for Existing Power Stations — Bringing 'Capture Ready' to Reality," Proceedings of the 33rd International Technical Conference on Coal Utilization & Fuel Systems (June 2008).
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- (5) C. Kuhr et al., "Experimentelle Untersuchungen und CFD-Simulationen zur Kohlenstaubverbrennung unter Oxyfuelbedingungen," Proceedings 24. Deutscher Flammentag (Sep. 2009) in German.
- (6) C. Bergins et al., "Overall System Development for Oxyfuel Combustion," 1st IEA GHG Oxyfuel Conference (Sep. 2009).

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Christian Bergins, Dr. Eng.

Joined Hitachi Power Europe GmbH in 2006, and now works as the Head of Research & Development. He is currently engaged in the development of oxyfuel combustion, CO₂-scrubbing, 700°C power plant technology, and dry lignite power plant technology. Dr. Bergins is the HPE Representative for Technology at European Power Plant Suppliers Association, Brussels (EPPSA) and Information Centre for Climate-Friendly Coal-Fired Power Plants, Berlin (IZ-Klima).



Song Wu, Ph. D.

Joined Hitachi Power Systems America, Ltd. in 2006, and now works as a Director of Advanced Technologies. He is currently engaged in the development of clean-coal technologies, including CCS. Dr. Wu is a member of the Air & Waste Management Association.

Agenda Item 4.9

P-04-459 A direct rail connection from Cardiff Airport to Cardiff central and west Wales

Petition wording:

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government develop a direct rail connection from Cardiff Airport itself to Cardiff central and west Wales.

There is a substantial need for a fast direct rail route straight from the actual Cardiff International Airport itself directly into Cardiff Central train station (and westwards to west Wales) so that national and international visitors are properly serviced and catered for at our National Airport. There is already a railway stop at Rhoose which is less than a mile away from the airport. It is a wasted opportunity not to extend this line to Cardiff International Airport itself so that travellers from all over the world, straight from their flight, can jump straight on to a train that takes them to the capital city of Wales and beyond.

Petition raised by: Sovereign Wales

Date petition first considered by Committee: 19 March 2013

Number of signatures: 39

P-04-459 A direct rail connection from Cardiff Airport to Cardiff central and west Wales – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Chair, 23.06.15

Dear Mr Powell,

Many thanks for your letter regarding this petition and your decision to close it. In view of the information that this is not a devolved matter, I don't think I can be of any more assistance this time. The only points I would make in closing is that I believe this matter should be devolved and perhaps the relevant Welsh minister should write to the UK government requesting that they look at the option of a direct line to the airport and offer the full support of the Welsh Government to help make it happen,

I hope this is of some help.

Diolch eto,

Gruff

Agenda Item 4.10

P-04-539 Save Cardiff Coal Exchange

Petition wording:

This petition seeks a commitment from the Welsh Government to set up a public enquiry into the events surrounding the Coal Exchange and to support public opinion which seeks to protect and conserve the building.

The Coal Exchange is one of Cardiff's most important buildings and one of the finest buildings in Wales. It's where the world's first million pound deal was struck during the city's industrial heyday (equivalent to over £100m today). Yet far from cherishing this building, Cardiff council proposes to demolish the main body of the building, keeping only the facades.

If this happens, then the magnificent interior with its immense historical significance will be lost forever. This grade 2* listed building deserves better, and the views of the public need to be heard.

The Council have been claiming for the past year that it is on the point of collapse. No works have been done, yet there is no apparent evidence that the building is about to collapse. It is questioned if Cardiff Council were able to use section 78 powers under the building act to progress their plans, and this needs to be investigated openly.

So much of Cardiff Bay's social and built heritage has already been destroyed; it seems inconceivable that more can be cast aside with cynical abandon.

It's unclear why the council refuses to see the value of restoring the Coal Exchange to protect this iconic building for the use and enjoyment of future generations.

The issues are of the highest level of public interest, and it is considered essential that an open public consultation occurs to review matters.

Petition raised by: Jon Avent

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 11 March 2014

Number of signatures: 389 signatures. An associated petition hosted on another website collected 2680 signatures.

Edwina Hart MBE CStJ AC / AM
Gweinidog yr Economi, Gwyddoniaeth a Thrafnidiaeth
Minister for Economy, Science and Transport



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-539
Ein cyf/Our ref EH/02769/15

William Powell AM
Chair - petitions committee

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

30 June 2015

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter of 18 June regarding the Cardiff Coal Exchange.

A draft feasibility study has been prepared by our consultant in association with Economy Science and Transport and CADW officials, and subject to final refinements, is expected to be completed very shortly. I am happy to share the report with you once it is available.

The firm appointed to carry out this initial study was selected from my department's established consultancy framework and are able to provide comprehensive and strategic advice in the areas of building surveying and cost management, in addition to experience of historic buildings. Officials from CADW have been fully engaged in the project to date.

I hope to be able to write to you again very shortly regarding the completed feasibility report.

Edwina Hart

P-04-539 Save the Coal Exchange – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Clerking Team, 05.07.15

Kayleigh

Many thanks.

It was a pleasure meeting the committee at the Coal Exchange last week, and being able to show just what a surprisingly good condition the building is in.

I read with interest the recent letter from Edwina Hart.

I would strongly question the extent to which Cadw (please note it should not be written CADW in correspondence, as it is not an acronym. Ironically it is a word meaning 'to keep', which might actually emphasise the lack of dialogue or engagement with Cadw by Edwina Hart.

On the issue of selected consultants for the recent building appraisal, I would reiterate the discussion I had with the committee at the building last week and the fact that the consultants being engaged by Edwina Hart have not been selected from the Cadw heritage framework.

There also did not appear to be any advertised tender process for the commission that Edwina Hart awarded. Welsh Government may indeed have other consultant frameworks, but in the area of built heritage it is inconceivable, and wholly inappropriate, that the Cadw heritage consultants framework should be so blatantly ignored. This again demonstrates an apparent lack of consultation with Cadw who would have insisted that consultants were engaged from their own framework.

I trust this brief response email will be forwarded to the committee and thank you again for your ongoing support and assistance, which is appreciated.

Regards

Agenda Item 4.11

P-04-556 No to Junction 41 closure

Petition wording:

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government not to close Junction 41 of the M4 for the following reasons: 1. The closure will negatively impact the town centre traders and businesses. 2. The closure will cause traffic chaos in the town as residents try to access the motorway. 3. There has been insufficient consultation with the townspeople. 4. Further research is needed into alternative solutions. 5. The new train station cannot be a transport hub if it is not easily accessible. 6. It will adversely affect the town redevelopment.

Additional Text: Again, the needs of motorists have been prioritised over those of the people of Port Talbot. The town was desecrated when the motorway was originally built through the heart of the town and now we are expected to suffer the pollution whilst traffic passes through our town on the way to somewhere else! The motorway, not the Steelworks, is the towns biggest polluter, and yet we who breathe it in will be unable to gain access to it. Plans to reroute the towns traffic through the streets will add to traffic pollution and bring chaos. People of the town understand the issues with the motorway but demand real consultation on options and alternatives. Please give us a chance to protect our town.

Petition raised by: Rose David

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 13 May 2014

Number of signatures: 1652. An associated paper petition was handed in and collected 22,467 signatures.



Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-556
Ein cyf/Our ref EH/01842/15

William Powell
Chair
Petitions Committee

seneddpetitions@assembly.wales

6 May 2015

Dear William,

Thank you for your further letter received by my office on 21 April regarding the trial part time closure of the westbound on-slip at junction 41 of the M4.

The trial operated until the end of March, and I will take a decision on the way forward following receipt of the final report in May. In the interim I have decided on the basis of advice from my officials that the part-time closures will continue.

Evaluation of the effect of the Average Speed Enforcement system on traffic flow will be made using data from the eastbound M4, as no junction closures have taken place in this direction.

Public consultation would take place as part of plans for any permanent closure.

Edwina Hart

P-04-556 No to Closing Junction 41 – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 07.07.15

NO TO CLOSURE OF JUNCTION 41

To all members of the Petitions Committee,

I would like to make the committee aware that the Junction 41 Action Group against the closure remains very active in the town, maintaining public awareness of the implications of the closure and gathering anecdotal and statistical information about the actual daily effects of the closure.

The Action Group is undertaking its own evaluation of the Final Evaluation Report produced by S.W.T.R.A. and finds it flawed, ambiguous and misleading in many instances. A full response from the Action Group will be forwarded to the Minister shortly. I would urge the committee to consider some of the observations listed below before accepting the Report's findings.

With such short notice I am only able to give a flavour of our concerns with regard to the report.

The tone and content of the Report seems to be skewed to support the Key Objectives.

1. Reduced Average Journey Times: (Objective 2)

Significantly, this is the objective upon which the primary monetary evaluation is based. Unfortunately, the objective is rather vague. What percentage reduction would justify the closure? How many seconds saved would be considered significant? What are the parameters?

Press reports prior to the trial specify an 11% increase in traffic flow as a justification for the closure, (South Wales Evening Post , March 18th 2014) and yet traffic flow is no measured.

In the Executive Summary, average journey times between Junctions 38 and 42 are reported to have been reduced by up to 34 seconds (5 %). This highlighted statistic is hailed as meeting Objective 2. However, close analysis of the actual statistics (table 3.2) combining all the journeys reveal the average gain on westbound journeys during the junction closures of approx. only 12-13 seconds. (Indeed,

selective use of the statistics could be employed to argue that between 7 and 8 A.M. average journey times actually increase by 18seconds (4%).)

Either way, a saving of, on average, 12 seconds on an average 9.5 minute stretch of the Motorway is surely not sufficient to justify any closure.

2. OBJ 3 To reduce the Accident Rate between J 38& 42 during peak periods:

This is a complete red herring. The report includes this as an objective but is unable to provide any statistics. I would argue that accident statistics are freely available and that there are no reported accidents at Junction 41 westbound either before or during the trial period. To include this as an objective implies otherwise and is again misleading.

3. OBJ 1 Journey Time Reliability:

The Report does not make allowance for the introduction of the Average Speed Cameras , which have had a noticeable effect on traffic speeds, causing motorists to slow down quickly and then speed up gradually. The introduction of the cameras part way through the trial has skewed these results.

In addition, the report states that it is informed by data retrieved from Tom Tom navigation systems but does not give any indication of the number of vehicles tracked. How reliable are these statistics?

4.Secondary impacts:

Under the objectives of the report, it is stated that " the assessment of the supplementary impacts on the local areadoes not form part of the evaluation of the success or otherwise of the slip road closure in terms of its performance against the objectives.'

How can this report have any credibility if the effect on the local roads is not taken properly into consideration?

Local roads: The report states that "..overall, there is no evidence at present of the trial slip road closures adversely affecting the majority of the key routes through Port Talbot"

This is patent nonsense. All key local roads experienced increased congestion during the trial. The average time delay recorded on the Action Group survey was

15 minutes. Indeed if there wasn't any adverse impact on local roads, we wouldn't be fighting the closure! We can only assume the recording techniques were flawed.

Air Quality:

Diffusion tube no. 61 indicates that for the 3 months pre closure period the average concentration of Nitrogen Oxide (NO₂) was 31.2 . For the 7 months post closure, levels of 42.3 were recorded. (table 5.2). This reading clearly exceeds the government's long term quality objective. In relation to Carbon emissions, the report admits that its own statistics are based upon assumptions that the percentage of HGV' s remained constant. Assumptions should not form part of a report at this level.

5. I believe the Chamber of Trade will respond to the report findings in relation to shopping patterns etc. but, again, we feel that the report findings are based upon insufficient and inaccurate data.

In conclusion, I hope that we can persuade the committee to see that the closure of our junction would be devastating for our town for all the reasons put forward in my previous correspondence. The Final Evaluation Report adds insult to injury. We find it biased, flawed and inaccurate. It is narrow in its focus, dismissive of local problems and partisan in its findings.

The trumpeted economic benefits of £179,815 p.a. are spurious when based upon an average 12 second decrease in journey times. In any case, this figure falls far short of that expected by the WAG:

“Estimated wider economic benefit of time and accident savings on the M4 is expected to be over £1 million per year’ : Edwina Hart. (Reported in the South Wales Evening Post March 18th, 2014).

Members of the Action Group would be more than happy to discuss our findings with AM's. we would welcome an opportunity to dissect the Trial Evaluation Report and to discuss other alternatives to closure. We only ask to be consulted properly and for our opinions to be considered.

Thanks for listening today,

Faithfully, Rose David (petitioner)

P-04-578 Noise Mitigation Works on the M4 to the West of Junction 32

Petition Wording

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to take action to reduce the noise from the M4 motorway to the west of junction 32 as it passes over the valley of the river Taff

Petition raised by: Margaret Watt

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 15 July 2014

Number of signatures: 19

Edwina Hart MBE CStJ AC / AM
Gweinidog yr Economi, Gwyddoniaeth a Thrafnidiaeth
Minister for Economy, Science and Transport



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-578
Ein cyf/Our ref EH/02768/15

William Powell AM
Chair
Petitions Committee

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

26 June 2015

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter of 18 June regarding the petition from Margaret Watt about noise mitigation from the M4 to the west of junction 32.

As outlined in my letter of 17 September 2014, parts of the M4 to the west of junction 32 were found to be above the threshold level required to trigger an intervention. A Noise Priority Area at this location has now been identified as a priority two site where design of mitigation works could commence after 2018-19.

However, the Committee may wish to note that I have recently been provided with Mrs Watt's address, which is located outside this area. The surveying exercise showed that Mrs Watt's home experiences noise levels below the intervention level and therefore does not qualify for noise mitigation measures.

Our next noise surveying exercise of the motorway and trunk road network will commence in 2017.

Edwina Hart

**P-04-578 Noise Mitigation Works on the M4 to the West of Junction 32 –
Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Clerking Team, 07.07.15**

Dear Kayleigh Driscoll,

Thank you for resending the letter from Edwina Hart in English.

On reading it I discover that my property is outside the area that is scheduled for noise mitigation! I am horrified as I have by far and away the most noise here. The motorway has been widened and the hard shoulder includes in the lanes so that we can clearly see the traffic and certainly hear it. There is a lip in the road as the traffic passes over the bridge and when a lorry hits that it reverberates around the valley.

I watched and listened to the team discuss my petition and they said they were aware of the noise. After Edwina's letter stating that we are not in the area for noise abatement work, I would be very grateful if I could have a site visit here to establish the undeniable facts, that the noise is intolerable and not only spoils my life but as a tourist destination it is an embarrassment for Wales!

I hope you can pass this on to the team.

Margaret Watt.

Agenda Item 4.13

P-04-599 Impact of Domestic Rating on Self Catering Accommodation

Petition wording

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

1. Undertake a thorough review and impact assessment of the Non Domestic Rating (Definition of Domestic Property) (Wales) Order 2010, with particular reference to:

a. the potential for adverse impact on new self catering tourism businesses, as they develop their marketing strategies during the first two years of trading;

b. the critical impact of severe weather events on marketing strategies and hence occupancy rates during a particular calendar year.

2. Have regard to the findings of such a review, specifically by instructing the Valuation Office for Non Domestic Rates in Wales to adopt a flexible and business friendly approach, including potential for the retrospective waiving of Council Tax, where there is clear evidence of a genuine case.

3. Review its overall tourism marketing strategy, to ensure that Visit Wales registered self catering businesses are not disadvantaged by disproportionate emphasis upon coastal tourism and serviced accommodation, such as cruising and hotels.

As well as fostering a positive climate for new self catering business, this would also serve to create a level playing field for business with England and the other nations of the United Kingdom – and ensure that the self catering sector, so vital to the Welsh tourism economy, is no longer marginalised.

Petitioner : Chris Harris

First considered by the Committee: 23 September 2014

Number of Signatures: 27

Edwina Hart MBE CStJ AC / AM
Gweinidog yr Economi, Gwyddoniaeth a Thrafnidiaeth
Minister for Economy, Science and Transport



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-599
Ein cyf/Our ref EH/01906/15

William Powell AM
Chair - petitions committee

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

7 May 2015

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter of 23 April seeking in relation to Domestic Rating and Self Catering Accommodation.

I am currently considering potential amendments to the Non-Domestic Rating (Definition of Domestic Property) (Wales) Order 2010, following the IRRV report and subsequent consultation. Detailed work has been undertaken and advice sought from the Valuation Office Agency and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, to ensure that any amendments retain the original intention of the Order whilst addressing the issues that business has raised.

I intend to issue a technical consultation in the summer on a revised Order and supporting guidance. This will provide key stakeholders the opportunity to consider and inform the practical application of the proposed amendments. Following this consultation I plan to make the new Order in the autumn term.

Following on from the IRRV report, the subsequent consultation and planned next steps, I am content that sufficient actions have been taken in terms of reviewing current procedures.

Edwina Hart

**P-04-599 Impact of Domestic Rating on Self Catering Accommodation –
Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Clerking Team, 05.07.15**

Dear Kayleigh/Bill Powell

That is encouraging that the Welsh Assembly are looking at this issue this summer, but the IRRV Report came out in Sept 2013, nearly 2 years ago. The Welsh Assembly have already put their hands up and agreed that this policy is wrong. This does not help us though now and other businesses. As the Welsh Assembly agree that this policy is wrong this should be looked at retrospectively, as I run an honest and well run business. The year we are looking at in our business is the first year and most businesses take upto 3 years to get off their feet'. Other issues taken into account should be adverse weather and Welsh Tourism Marketing. I can tell you now that when this ruling came in dring April 2010 I am sure very few people new of this ruling. I have spoken to people over the last year to year and a half and very few people in the tourist industry new about this ruling within this time.

I have been to a VOA hearing where they said to me that I had an extremely good case but they were not in the position to say yes or no with regards to the policy.

My summary of this is that it should be looked at now which is great, but it should be looked at retrospectively to 2010, bearing in mind I paid Business tax from April – Oct 2010. Its only since Nov 2013 that there has been this demand of Council tax from us and we have not used our Self-Catering Business as a domestic property at all.

Best Regards

Chris Harris

Agenda Item 4.14

P-04-581 Opposition to cuts in provision for learners of English as an Additional Language

Petition Wording:

We, the undersigned, call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to reconsider its cuts to pupils acquiring English as an Additional Language (EAL) in schools. Additional funding is required to prevent the marginalisation of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds in schools through specialist support which aims to raise educational standards and ensure equality of opportunity for all.

The reduction in the MEAG grant impacts exclusively upon ethnic minority pupils at a time when unprecedented numbers of EAL learners are in our schools. Lack of consultation fails to examine the scale, scope and impact of our support upon individuals, their families and whole school achievement.

Additional Information:

The reduction in the MEAG grant impacts exclusively upon ethnic minority pupils at a time when unprecedented numbers of EAL learners are in our schools. Lack of consultation fails to examine the scale, scope and impact of our support upon individuals, their families and whole school achievement.

Petition raised by: Helen Myers

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 23 September 2014

Number of signatures: 37

Huw Lewis AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau
Minister for Education and Skills



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-581
Ein cyf/Our ref HL/01136/15

William Powell AM
Chair - Petitions Committee

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

29 June 2015

Dear William

Petition P-04-581 Opposition to Cuts in Provision for Learners of English as an Additional Language

Thank you for your further letter of 18 June about the above petition. I have noted the information you have attached to your letter.

As you know from my letter of 21 April, the Minority Ethnic Achievement Grant became part of the Education Improvement Grant (EIG) on 1 April. The Welsh Government is presently agreeing with local authorities and regional consortia outcome measures and headline activity for the EIG which support our education improvement plan, Qualified for Life. We will ensure that the needs of minority ethnic learners are being adequately addressed through this planning process and that robust support is provided to all learners who may be at risk of failing, or who need additional support.

From 2016-17, the Welsh Government will implement a more formal Outcomes Framework developed with local authorities and regional consortia and this will encompass the needs of all learners, including those from a minority ethnic background.

Yours sincerely

Huw Lewis AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau
Minister for Education and Skills

Agenda Item 4.15

P-04-399 Slaughter Practices

Petition wording:

We call upon the National Assembly to urge the Welsh Government to ban the practise of slaughtering animals without pre-stunning them.

Petition raised by: Royce Clifford

Date petition first considered by Committee: 19 June 2012

Number of signatures: 400

P-04-433 : CCTV in Slaughterhouses

Petition wording:

We call on the National Assembly to urge the Welsh Government to introduce mandatory CCTV in slaughterhouses to help vets with better regulation and monitoring, to provide footage for training and retraining, to deter some of the animal welfare abuses filmed by Animal Aid, and to provide evidence for prosecutions should they be necessary.

Petition raised by: Animal Aid

Date petition first considered by Committee: 6 November 2012

Number of signatures: 1066

Rebecca Evans AC / AM
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Ffermio a Bwyd
Deputy Minister for Farming and Food



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-399 & P-04-433
Ein cyf/Our ref RE/00420/15

William Powell AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

22 June 2015

Dear William,

I write to provide an update to P-04-399 and P-04-433.

P-04-399

I am committed to ensuring that a high standard of welfare for all animals kept in Wales is maintained at all stages of their life, including at the point of slaughter. I launched the Wales Animal Health & Welfare Framework in July 2014. The broad vision for the new framework is to continue improving standards of animal health and welfare in Wales. I will be issuing a statement on the first annual Implementation Plan published under the Framework in due course.

The Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing (Wales) Regulations 2014 introduced by the Welsh Government in May 2014, implement the provisions of the European Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing, which provide extensive animal welfare protection.

(EC) No 1099/2009 requires that animals are stunned before slaughter, but this stunning requirement can be disapplied in relation to animals killed to meet religious requirements, at the discretion of the competent authorities within each Member State.

There are long-standing provisions in our law which, subject to specific requirements, permits the slaughter of animals without stunning to meet Jewish and Muslim religious requirements.

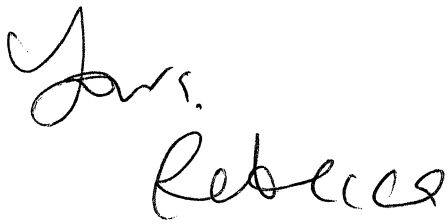
The Food Standards Agency (FSA) monitors, delivers and enforces the welfare provisions at all slaughterhouses in Wales on behalf of the Welsh Government. The role of FSA Official Veterinarians at slaughterhouses includes the monitoring of provisions in place to ensure that animals are spared unnecessary suffering, distress or pain during the slaughter process.

My Officials have been working with the FSA and Local Authorities in Wales to improve the enforcement provisions for the welfare of animals during transport and at the slaughterhouse.

P-04-433

Following a request by the Welsh Government, the Farm Animal Welfare Committee (FAWC) has prepared advice about the use of CCTV in slaughterhouses. I am currently reviewing its content. I provide a link to the opinion of advice produced and published by FAWC.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fawc-opinion-on-cctv-in-slaughterhouses>

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mrs. Rebecca'.

Rebecca Evans AC / AM
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Ffermio a Bwyd
Deputy Minister for Farming and Food

Agenda Item 4.17

P-04-552 Child Protection

Petition wording:

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to review and strengthen child protection criteria and consider establishing a regulatory body for Wales. This should aim to ensure that those who have charge of children, whether that's in schools, youth clubs, charities where children are the main focus, or people coming into contact or being invited in as patrons, governors, ambassadors, public servants or anybody appointed by children's charities are assessed as to their suitability to work with and around children.

Additional information: As it stands, local and county councillors and people appointed as ambassadors or Chairs of children's charities do not undergo DBS checks. Most of these people get open door access to children because of their position. In the light of the Jimmy Saville affair and the Ian Watkins affair, will the Welsh Assembly now recognise that we can no longer blindly accept people on the basis of their celebrity or social position and allow them access to children.

Petition raised by: Montessori Centre Wales

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 13 May 2014

Number of signatures: 40

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

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