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# BWLETIN POLISI CYTÛN

## CYTÛN POLICY BULLETIN

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## WELSH GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO SILK COMMISSION

**The Welsh Government's vision for Wales' long term constitutional future within a devolved United Kingdom has been unveiled by the First Minister, Carwyn Jones.**

In a submission to the UK Government's Commission on Devolution in Wales (The Silk Commission), the First Minister is calling for Welsh devolution to be enhanced and restructured through a new Government of Wales Act in order to strengthen accountability, and reduce the scope for conflict between the Welsh and UK Governments.

The new settlement would replace the present "conferral model" of devolution, whereby powers are devolved to Wales on specific matters, with a "Reserved powers" model, where specific areas of responsibility such as constitutional affairs, defence, foreign affairs, social security and macro-economic policy would be "reserved" to the UK Parliament, with remaining matters devolved to Wales. The First Minister said none of the Welsh Government's or National Assembly's existing powers should be 'repatriated' to Westminster.

The Welsh Government is calling for legislative devolution to be extended in the following areas, in order to increase democratic accountability and ensure decision making that responds to the particular needs of Wales:

- Policing, community safety and crime prevention, including Anti-Social Behaviour Orders - in order to strengthen joint working with devolved services and reduce offending.
- Water – to fill gaps in the current settlement so that the Assembly has legislative competence in relation to all water matters, and to align competence with the England and Wales geographical boundary.
- Vulnerable adults and children - to clarify and extend competence including in relation to taking children into care, fostering and adoption (public child law).
- Road safety and powers to improve public transport – including powers over speed and drink driving limits, bus and taxi regulation.

- Ports - to ensure that we maximise the economic development potential of Welsh ports.
- Licensing of alcohol and late night entertainment – in order to promote public health and community safety.
- Administrative Justice in relation to devolved areas, including arrangements for complaints and redress.
- The administration of elections in Wales - including Elections to the National Assembly for Wales and local authorities.
- Taxation – powers consistent with the Silk 1 recommendations to enable the Assembly to legislate on devolved taxes.

The Welsh Government believes these responsibilities should be devolved to the Assembly by 2020/21, as part of a wider reform of the UK Constitution following the Scottish independence referendum. The Welsh Government is also exploring the scope for extending the devolution settlement in relation to rail services and infrastructure, ahead of this timetable

It is also calling for the devolution to Wales, of executive responsibilities in the following areas, to take effect from times agreed between the Welsh and UK Governments:

- The consenting of large scale energy generation (except nuclear power) and related energy infrastructure – to enable locally sensitive decision making and consistency with other planning powers which are already devolved;
- The youth justice system – in order to promote innovative approaches to prevent young people from offending, and join up with already devolved children’s services;
- Minister of the Crown functions within the Assembly’s devolved legislative competence. These should in future be discharged by the Welsh Ministers;
- Responsibilities for the appointment of the Welsh member of the BBC Trust, and also the Chair and members of the S4C Authority, to ensure that Welsh interests are represented in these crucial institutions;
- Civil contingencies – to confirm the Welsh Ministers’ current de facto leadership and co-ordination role in civil emergencies and clarify accountability;
- Certain marine matters, where powers currently exercisable only in relation to the Welsh inshore area should be extended to encompass the Welsh offshore area.

All transfers of responsibilities from the UK Government to the Welsh Government would need to be accompanied by full budget transfers, subject to independent scrutiny. In the Welsh Government’s view, there should be no need for a further referendum before these proposals are given effect. The outcome of the referendum held in March 2011 confirmed

the electorate's support for the National Assembly as an institution with extensive legislative authority for Wales.

*Further details and to read the submission, click [here](#).*

## **IMPACT OF WELFARE REFORM REVEALED**

**A series of reports published by the Welsh Government has presented a study on the impact changes to the welfare system will have on the people and economy of Wales.**

The two reports commissioned by the Welsh Government to better understand the impact of the welfare reforms show that the changes to the UK welfare system announced prior to December's Autumn Statement will reduce total benefit and tax credit entitlements in Wales by around £590 million in 2014-15. Additional cuts announced in December's Autumn Statement mean losses will be even higher than this.

Overall, families with children and those from low-middle income families will suffer the most from the changes.

Reforms to Disability Living Allowance account for some of the greatest cuts in Wales. Around 42,500 people in Wales are estimated to lose their entitlement as a result of this reform - an average loss of up to £83 per claimant per week and an annual loss of up to £183m in Wales as a whole.

Those hit by the cuts in welfare payments are likely to reduce their spending on goods and services, taking even more money out of the Welsh economy.

*The reports are available [here](#).*

## **NEW SCHOOLS INFO PORTAL BOOSTS PARENT POWER**

**An innovative new website which provides statistical information on every maintained school in Wales has been launched by the Welsh Labour Government.**

The website, [mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk](http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk), contains hundreds of thousands of pieces of data providing an accessible, valuable information portal for parents and carers and those interested in school education statistics in Wales. It is part of the Welsh Government's drive to give parents a clearer picture of how schools across Wales are performing and to improve the openness and transparency of school statistics.

The site allows users to view a range of statistical information about an individual school including:

- Contextual information such as the type of school, school population, how many teachers.

- Performance information at foundation phase, key stage 2 and 3, GCSE and A level. Banding and underlying banding indicators are also presented.
- Financial information such as expenditure per school.
- A link to the most recent Estyn report.

## **VOLUNTEERING FUND OPENS FOR APPLICATIONS**

**The Welsh Government has announced that the Volunteering in Wales scheme has been extended to 2014.**

Funding totalling £911,500 is now available from the Volunteering in Wales Fund to meet the cost of recruiting and developing Third Sector volunteers. Organisations can apply for grants of up to £25,000 to cover volunteer expenses, training and to recruit specialist staff to help in finding and supporting new volunteers.

The fund is currently supporting over 70 organisations across Wales and in the last year alone, it has helped recruit over 5,300 new volunteers who have contributed more than 380,000 hours to the benefit of Welsh communities.

Third Sector organisations interested in applying for funding should contact the WCVA Helpdesk on 0800 2888 329. The deadline for applications is Friday 22 March.

## **PRIORITIES FOR TACKLING SUBSTANCE MISUSE IN WALES OUTLINED**

**Welsh Health Minister Lesley Griffiths has outlined the Welsh Government's priorities for tackling substance misuse between 2013-15.**

The third delivery plan of the Welsh Government's 10 year Substance Misuse Strategy, "Working Together to Reduce Harm", sets out the actions to be taken nationally, regionally and locally to reduce the harm caused by drug and alcohol misuse. Actions over the coming three years include:

- The development of a specific route to treatment for veterans.
- A plan for responding to the threat of new and emerging trends in substance misuse.
- Better integrated care pathways for substance misuse service users.

The Welsh Government has also announced more than £1.18m in funding to improve substance misuse treatment facilities across Wales in 2012-2013 and 2013-2014.

**Further details are available [here](#).**

## SUPPORTING INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Welsh Equalities Minister Jane Hutt has announced over £74,000 for projects across Wales that will be held to mark International Women's Day 2013.

The theme for International Women's Day in Wales this year, which take place on March 8<sup>th</sup>, is 'Visible Women: Empowering girls and women in Wales'. The organisations that will receive funding include:

- The Vi-ability educational programme in Swansea
- Wales Assembly of Women
- Llanelli Multicultural Network
- Welsh Asian Women's Achievement Awards

A full list of projects which are being supported is attached. Further information about International Women's Day in Wales can be found here:

<http://wenwales.org/international-womens-day>

## WELSH RECYCLING RATES CONTINUE TO RISE

People in Wales recycled 54% of their waste between July and September 2012.

New figures show there has been a three percent rise in recycling rates compared to the same three months in 2011/12 and a one percent increase when compared to the previous three months (April – June 2012).

Councils including Wrexham and Caerphilly recycled 59% of their rubbish, while Blaenau Gwent and Merthyr Tydfil reported the biggest rise in their recycling rates when compared with the same quarter in 2011, with increases of 17 and 14 percent respectively, thanks to improvements to their recycling collection systems.

The Welsh Government's overarching waste strategy, Towards Zero Waste, set ambitious targets of recycling 52 percent of Wales's waste by 2012/13 and 70 percent by 2024/25. These statistics show that Wales remains on track to meet its first statutory target.

*The latest recycling rates for Local Authorities across wales can be found [here](#).*

## SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AT RISK OF NEGLECT IN WALES

The Welsh Government has approved funding of £75,000 for a project to identify and help children at risk of neglect in Wales.

The project, proposed and delivered by NSPCC and Action for Children, will develop a stronger national approach to ensure neglected children get the help they need. This includes more timely identification, training for multi-disciplinary frontline professionals, adoption of evidence-based tools, and provision of effective responses to all children where there are concerns about neglect.

The project will build on existing knowledge, resources and expertise on child neglect and recommendations will be made to the Welsh Government on how to improve multi-agency responses to address child neglect in Wales.

Neglect accounts for almost half of children with a child protection plan in Wales. Responses to neglect need to be proportionate and a better understanding of the distinction between unintentional neglect, which often results from poor parenting skills, and wilful neglect which requires the involvement of social services, is required.

One of the key findings of research into neglect has been that most cases were referred to social services, but where cases were thought to be low priority (unintentional neglect) little support or intervention was provided. In many cases of unintentional neglect, especially those linked to poor parenting, better outcomes could be achieved by multi-agency action in early intervention programmes rather than referrals to social services.

## **NEW GRANT FUND TO TACKLE POVERTY**

**A new small grant fund that aims to tackle poverty has been announced by the Welsh Minister for Local Government and Communities, Carl Sargeant.**

From April, funding totalling £3.8 million a year will be available to organisations across Wales from the Tackling Poverty Small Grants Fund. The new Fund incorporates the Communities First Trust Fund and the small grants scheme that was previously available via the Community Facilities and Activities Programme (CFAP).

This new fund providing grants of up to £3,000 a year will retain the best features of both previous schemes but will be much more clearly aligned to current Welsh Government priorities. Grants will be available for a wide range of activities including education and training initiatives, play facilities, child care facilities for those undertaking education or training, as well as for sports equipment and venue and equipment hire for events connected with promoting healthy living, economic or educational development.

All Communities First Clusters will also be able to apply for a few larger grants each year to support their local Delivery Plans. Applicants will need to demonstrate how the proposal is relevant to the Welsh Government's Tackling Poverty agenda and confirm that the main beneficiaries are primarily people most in need of support.

## **SURVEY SHOWS HIGH SATISFACTION RATES IN NHS WALES**

**Satisfaction with the NHS in Wales is higher than the European average and compares favourably with the UK average, according to National Survey for Wales results published this month.**

The survey also shows 97 per cent of people seen by a GP and 95 per cent attending a hospital appointment said they were treated with dignity and respect.

Satisfaction with treatment in Accident and Emergency departments was 84 per cent, and 92 per cent of those who had attended hospital appointments were satisfied with the care they received.

The National Survey for Wales began in January 2012 and each year involves more than 14,000 face-to-face interviews across Wales with people aged 16 and over. The latest results are based on the first 3,500 interviews. The Survey includes a series of questions about people's experiences of NHS services, including access to health care services, satisfaction with health care, and whether people felt they were treated with dignity and respect.

The survey results also reinforce the need for the work underway to address some areas where satisfaction is not as high as others, including the finding that 31 per cent of people who made an appointment with a GP found it difficult to make a convenient appointment. The Welsh Labour Government has made it a priority to improve access to GP services, and recent statistics show we are making progress, with 9 out of 10 GP practices in Wales now offering early evening appointments.

59 per cent of people also say they would like more information about how their local health services are performing. This is why the Welsh Government recently announced a new system of Annual Quality statements within the NHS to assess the quality of service and share findings with the public.

*The full questionnaire and results is available [here](#).*

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