

exchange

FOR BEVAN FOUNDATION MEMBERS

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SUMMER 2015



- common good
- gambling
- medicines
- nursing
- homelessness
- public service reform
- Welsh language
- ageing

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Feature *Steve Wyler*

Steve Wyler is a member of the Call to Action for the Common Good steering group. He is an independent social change consultant, an Associate of the Carnegie UK Trust, and previously ran *Locality*.



Working for the common good

Across the UK, we see a failure of reform, an inability to renew vital services and agencies, a ‘small-minded’ view of the world, and a loss of national confidence. ‘Business as usual’ is dominated by short-term individual self-interest, institutional vested interests, negative competition, and command-and-control practices. But do we have to accept it has to be like this?

The last time we faced challenges of this order was in 1945, in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, when the national debt was immense and the economy in pieces. But how did we respond at that time? Then, the national consensus was optimistic, there was a vision of mutual support and interdependency, a willingness to embrace positive change. In the face of adversity, came the NHS, universal pensions, child benefit, and national parks.

Today, it seems our horizons are shrinking. Worse still, this negative consensus is producing a culture of blame, a tendency to demonise those on benefits or immigrants, inter-generational tensions, a growing mood of intolerance and social division. We are not all in this together. We are divided by economic and social inequality, and far too many people feel powerless, they feel that they are ‘done to’, that they are treated as the problem, and not the solution. They find it difficult through traditional politics to make their voices heard.

So, what can be done about this? We believe that today, just as in 1945, there are alternatives, that positive change is possible. But it will require a bold set of responses, in which individuals, civil society institutions, businesses, governments, political parties all have a role to play.

Last year a group of civil society activists came together to form a *Call to Action for the Common Good*. Fundamentally, we believe that a shift in thinking and practice in favour of the common good could provide the basis for a more hopeful story of change.

We are not starting from scratch. After all, the philosophy of the common good can be traced all the way back to Aristotle and Cicero, who identified the practice of the common good as a necessary condition for a good and just society. Aristotle argued that good of the community should set the direction for the lives of individuals, as a higher good than the particular goods of private persons, and Cicero believed that only through ‘consent to law and to a partnership for common good’ can a people thrive.

These views turned out to be remarkably persistent, emerging in both religious and secular contexts, underpinning efforts generation after generation to achieve social reform. Ideas of the common good are present in Catholic Social Teaching which emphasises that common goods are produced through human

relationships, and which calls for subsidiarity and human scale institutions, solidarity with the poorest, and (as in the current Pope's recent encyclical on the environment) action to safeguard our 'common home'. In the secular tradition, Robert Owen's 'villages of co-operation' and the wider co-operative movement which followed, the ideals of social solidarity advanced by early trade unionists, and twentieth century liberation and civil rights struggles, can all be seen as expressions of common good thinking.

For those of us in the Call to Action for the Common Good, the idea of the common good is founded on a proposition about people and relationships. The proposition that each person matters, that each person adds value, and that when some people are left out or left behind, the common good is diminished, and we all lose. From this simple but far-reaching idea several things follow:

- The common good is produced by collaboration. People are social animals. It is when we come together, build relationships and trust, and make commitments to each other, that we produce most value and contribute most to the common good. After all, some things can only be done collectively, and some essential things have to be shared by all of us, including future generations.
- The common good is produced by organisational change. If organisations in all sectors (companies large and small, government agencies, banks, media, universities, charities, trade unions) set out and followed a core purpose which truly serves society and respects the dignity of people, they would be more likely to thrive, and so would all of us.
- The common good is produced by an inclusive society. The structures and systems by which our society is organised must become much more inclusive, working for everyone including future generations, not just the greatest number or the favoured few.
- The common good is produced by respect and shared decision-making. Everyone should be at the table when decisions are made which affect them – no-one should be excluded, and estranged interests should be brought into dialogue for the sake of the common good.

The practical implications are far-reaching. To give a few examples, a common good 'mind-set' could lead to:

- re-inventing public spaces and facilities to make it easier for people to meet, build relationships, and learn, imagine, plan, share, make, and do things together;
- businesses rediscovering mission and purpose, acting beyond the pursuit of short term profits, reflecting the needs of all their stakeholders and regaining public trust;

We stand for...	We resist...
Collaboration	Competition at any cost
A culture based on relationships	A culture based on transactions
Solidarity	Intolerance
Long term ambition	Short termism
Doing by people	Doing to people
An economy serving human needs	Dominance of consumerism
Safeguarding the future	Exploiting resources
No one left behind	Extremes of wealth and opportunity
Valuing difference	Fearing difference
Liberating resourcefulness of the many	Command and control by the few

- a system of 'social security' that does not demonise individuals or treat them as the problem but genuinely supports and removes barriers to people achieving their potential and getting on with their lives;
- services for the public which respect individuals and start from the co-production premise that people should be active participants in the design and delivery of those services.
- more 'everyday democracy' allowing people much greater control over the way things are run in the 'small places', close to home.

Most importantly, we recognise that the common good does not need to be invented. It already exists around us in the best behaviours of individuals, families, communities, businesses, and local and national government. The behaviours that make us feel that after all, there is hope for us all.

An important task therefore is to reveal and to amplify the common good, finding ways where necessary to challenge and change behaviours and systems, making connections between different spheres of activity, and always drawing on the best practical experience and know-how, wherever we can find it.

Currently our activities are focused on two themes: how common good thinking could improve public services and how it could re-invigorate the role of charities. Alongside us, the *Blueprint for Better Business* is encouraging private companies to redefine core purpose based on common good principles, the Economy for the Common Good is growing an international movement, and Together for the Common Good is building awareness and momentum from a faith perspective. We are discovering many like-minded allies: Co-Production Wales, Commonweal in Scotland, the Enabling State initiative from the Carnegie UK Trust, and the New Economics Foundation, to name but a few.

Finally, the common good is not something fixed, it needs to be made and continually remade, and it depends on all of us. If you would like to find out more about our ideas and our work, and play a part in building a society which truly works for the common good, please visit calltoactionforthecommongood.org.uk.



Gambling: Wales' public health iceberg

**“If you gamble
long enough,
you’ll always lose –
the gambler is
always ruined.”**

**Michael Crichton,
*The Lost World***

Over the past decade there has been an unprecedented growth in online gambling and fixed odds betting machines. A multi-billion pound UK and international industry has synergistically expanded to such an extent it now pervades our lives in a way that few could have imagined. This unfettered growth is a product of intrusive and incessant advertising through all forms of social media and digital technology and is now an increasing feature of television advertising.

The type of gambling I am talking about is not the occasional bet on the Grand National or lottery ticket purchase, but the rise of a 24/7 online industry and a massive increase in gaming machines. Our concern should be about the way in which gambling has changed and grown into a multi-billion pound industry and the potential social and economic consequences, particularly for the young whose exposure and access to gambling is now a key target for gambling advertising.

What evidence there is points to an increase in gambling addiction. It’s a problem that is inadequately recognised and needs to be addressed by Welsh Government, the NHS and public health bodies.

One of the problems in understanding this issue is the lack of up to date information and data. The last Gambling Prevalence Survey was carried out by the UK Government in 2010 and has since been abolished, meaning that there is very little information on what has happened over the past five years.

The 2010 UK data indicates that 73 per cent of all

adults have gambled at some time. Of those who gamble, gambling was a significant problem for between one and 1.3 per cent. That’s around 350 - 450,000 people in the UK, which equates to around 20,000 persons in Wales. Notably, the data also show a higher rate of problem gambling amongst women in Wales compared with the rest of the UK. A 2009 survey by Ipsos Mori identified 2 per cent of 12-15 year olds, some 60,000 teenagers, as having significant gambling problems. This would suggest 3,000 12-15 year olds in Wales have such problems. These figures must be used cautiously, because they are more than five years out of date and because much data is dependent on self-reporting. However, it is reasonable to assume that there is a significant gambling addiction problem and that it is growing, even if we do not know enough about the full extent of that problem.

We can also reasonably assume that with the changes in technology and the constant bombardment of the population with gambling advertising that the take-up of online gambling is rising, and rising significantly. It is almost impossible to avoid the daily onslaught: mobile phone texts, internet adverts, TV adverts, newspaper adverts, betting shop window advertising, advertising at football grounds and so on. Advertising is now unashamedly intrusive, giving 24/7 access across all age groups. Anyone with a computer, smart-phone, or ipad is vulnerable irrespective of age, sex or race or location. It should concern us all that habitual gambling is in danger of being normalised.

According to a 2012 House of Commons Select Committee report on gambling, only about 20 per cent of online gambling is actually based in the UK, but even that is still worth nearly £2 billion annually. On this basis the overall value of online gambling must be around £10 billion per annum. Online gambling is also predicted to have increased by around a third by the end of this year. If this does not cause us concern – if it does not ring warning bells, it should!



...it is a very short step for a teenager who habitually 'games' using a virtual currency to gambling with actual money

The growth of fixed odds gaming machines in bookies should also concern us. Since the 2005 Gaming Act, betting office gaming machines have increased significantly. The maximum stakes are £100 for a potential £500 prize. It is possible to bet one hundred pounds in 20 seconds! Amongst those engaged in support and counselling services, these machines are described as the “crack cocaine” of gambling.

Of course the industry is concerned about its reputation and is putting in place codes of conduct and looking at how to spot potential problem gamblers, but in my view there is a lot more to do. Since the 2005 Gaming Act, the industry through the responsible Gambling Commission raises voluntarily around £6 million pounds for education, counselling and research. In Wales we have benefited from a three year, £180,000 per annum pilot focused on Newport, Cardiff and Swansea organised via the Addiction Recovery Agency. But this funding has now ended and it is still unclear what precisely will be put in its place - if anything. This will mean that the only funding for support for early intervention and counselling is an allocation of £25,000.

I believe that we are only glimpsing the tip of the gambling iceberg and that in particular online gambling is poorly understood and may represent a growing social problem. A student adviser from the University of South Wales told me:

“We have certainly seen a worrying growth in gambling ... it feels that for an increasing number of students gambling is highly addictive and impacting hugely on their personal lives, their ability to perform academically and indeed ultimately to remain on their course.”

These views are reflected by most other higher education institutions.

So what needs to be done?

I am firmly of the view that we should explore how we might use our planning powers more proactively to better manage the proliferation and location of betting outlets. The Assembly should also have increased powers over the regulation of fixed odds betting machines as is proposed for Scotland. We need also to engage with the Gambling Commission to ensure there is proper funding available for counselling and support services in Wales.

We need an education strategy for the young – this is an important point for if we know so little about gambling today, we know even less about how trends will develop into the future. One thing is clear, today’s teenagers are exposed to gambling in ways none of us ever were. Saturation advertising alongside televised sporting events means that we risk a future where, for the next generation, sport and gambling are intrinsically linked. Where sport once had the power to promote health, fitness and friendship, it may increasingly become a vehicle generating ever more bespoke gambling odds.

Because the internet is now such a central part of our lives, it has the potential to normalise gambling in a way that the physical effort required to visit a bookmaker never did. And consider this: it is a very short step for a teenager who habitually ‘games’ using a virtual currency to gambling with actual money. We know too that the internet can be addictive, so the question arises: is the combination of internet and gambling synergistically greater?

We simply don’t know, but my fear is that it is the fate of the next generation to find out. That’s why – devolved or not – Wales needs to take gambling seriously and have a public health strategy in place that gives our people the best chance of having a life that isn’t blighted by gambling addiction.



The value of medicines in a time of austerity

Over recent weeks the availability and cost of medicines in Wales has again hit the headlines, placing centre-stage the topic of value and cost alongside decisions on how best to allocate scarce resources at this time of austerity. With elections to the National Assembly for Wales in 2016, the NHS looks set to remain a hot topic for politicians and campaigners, as well as patients, doctors, nurses and everyone whose lives are touched by this vital public service.

The question is how can we deliver the new medicines that cure diseases, transform lives and provide hope to patients, against a continuing backdrop of austerity? Our view is that meeting rising demand within the current public spending environment is a tough challenge that can only be achieved by collaboration, with everyone involved in the nation's health working together to achieve the same objective of improving patient outcomes.

Medicines play a vital role in this, with innovative medicines transforming the lives of people suffering from life-threatening illnesses and long-term conditions. However, bringing medicines to life is a risky, costly business with the research and development for a single

medicine costing, on average, £1.2 billion without any guarantee of usage or funding.

If we want our NHS to deliver world-class outcomes, then we need to invest in these world-class medicines. Today, Wales and the UK lag behind many European countries (Ireland, Germany, France, Spain and Italy) when it comes to patients accessing and using modern medicines. This has a knock-on effect when it comes to assessing the UK's competitiveness as a place to do business in the life science sector. This is despite the UK having amongst the lowest prices in Europe for its medicines.

As the life sciences industry adapts to a changing world, in the UK we have agreed a unique approach to the funding of innovative medicines through the Pharmaceutical Price Regulation Scheme (PPRS). As a contribution to an exceptional period of austerity, we have agreed with the Department of Health to keep the branded medicines bill flat for two years, with below 2 per cent growth for a further three years. In practice, the industry will underwrite all further expenditure by the NHS, within agreed boundaries. For instance, last year we paid back just under £300m to the UK Government, this

year we estimate it will be £800 million. Over the lifetime of the five year agreement we expect to pay back approximately £4 billion, with an estimated £200m being paid to the Welsh Government.

In this way, the pharmaceutical industry is demonstrating its commitment to ensuring financial stability so that people in Wales can access the latest treatments.

It is because of the contribution from ground-breaking discoveries in antibiotics and vaccines, cardiovascular and respiratory medicines, to mention just a few, that today a baby boy born in the UK can expect to live for almost 79 years, and a girl for 83 years. That's almost



double the life expectancy of the early 1900s. In cancer, new therapies have contributed to a 20 per cent fall in cancer deaths since the 1990s, with two out of three people diagnosed with cancer now surviving at least five years.

How society puts a value on such medicines has never been easy, and at times it has proven highly controversial. If we want a healthcare system which is the best in the world, but have limited resources, then we must move towards assessing **all** healthcare interventions against their ability to improve patients' lives. Each time the media uncovers a patient travelling over the border to receive a treatment they can't access at home, it throws a spotlight on the issue of how different systems evaluate medicines, and how patients ultimately want the best care they can find.

Medicines, more so than any other health intervention, have been value assessed for 15 years. What makes that possible is the extraordinary and extensive research base that companies have invested in to bring these medicines to a point where they can be assessed, before being available more widely to patients. Getting the value assessment right is a key part of addressing the challenge. The ABPI urges that health technology assessments should be reformed, along with national and local policies, to take a holistic view of patient care costs, regardless of the disease area.

Unfortunately, access to and use of new medicines remains stubbornly low and slow across the UK. In his report in 2010, Professor Mike Richards, a leading British oncologist, compared the level of uptake for best-practice medicines in the UK and thirteen other countries. The UK ranked eighth overall – and finished in the bottom four for seven of the sixteen clinical-need types, including treatments for cancer, dementia and multiple sclerosis.

This year, the Office of Health Economics re-ran Professor Richards' work, expanding it to look at figures

for the devolved nations – as well as for the UK. Of the twenty-two medicine classes surveyed, in Wales prescribing for twelve were below the average. Even worse, they were well under 75 per cent of the average – showing that Wales' uptake of best-practice medicines continues to be a problem. Particularly worryingly, for treatments for multiple sclerosis, cancer and arthritis, Wales lags even further behind at under a quarter of the prescribing of the other countries.

The pharmaceutical industry wants to continue to be a real partner in the health of Wales, shaping a sustainable health system with patients at its heart. And yes, there is an economic as well as a health benefit. We have warmly welcomed and supported recent Welsh Government initiatives such as the prioritisation of life sciences under the *Sêr Cymru* and National Research Network initiatives. The newly launched Health and Care Research Wales holds particular potential, especially in regards to its focus on public involvement, engagement and participation. Health Wise Wales, with its ambition of developing a cohort of knowledgeable and willing citizens to engage in clinical research, is an initiative we should all be excited about.

Medicines also support economic growth by helping people to recover from illness, manage chronic conditions and return to work more quickly. We would argue that this benefit is worth investing in – and in return companies will continue to invest in innovation, produce life-enhancing medicines, and maintain this commitment for the long-term.

The challenge now is for government, in Wales and across the UK, to ensure that the available money flows to those delivering healthcare throughout the NHS in a way that allows patients to benefit from access to the latest innovative treatments and receive the best care available. We have a long way to go but we remain committed to collaborating with all those involved in the health system. Together we want ensure that everyone, no matter what the disease or where they live, has the right access to the right medicine at the right time.



access to and use of new medicines remains stubbornly low and slow across the UK

The PPRS means that:

- For patients and clinicians – PPRS provides an opportunity to find the right level of use for branded medicines, based on clinical factors rather than cost.
- For the NHS – the medicines bill growth has been underwritten, so commissioners and managers can remove barriers to clinicians choosing which medicines to use.
- For industry – PPRS gives stability and supports innovative companies, but there is a level of risk driven by austerity issues.
- For Welsh Government (and the taxpayer) – PPRS achieves predictability on the branded medicines bill throughout this period.

Health *Tracy Lenzy and Lisa Turnbull*

Tracy Lenzy is Communications and Media Manager and Lisa Turnbull is Policy and Public Affairs Adviser at the Royal College of Nursing in Wales



Safer nursing, better health

The Royal College of Nursing in Wales was delighted that the National Assembly for Wales voted unanimously to support legislation for safe nurse staffing levels in Wales during a debate at the Senedd on 3rd June. The 'Safe Nurse Staffing Levels (Wales) Bill', introduced by Kirsty Williams AM, has now progressed to Stage 2 in the legislative process where Assembly Members are able to table amendments for consideration by the Health and Social Care Committee.

The Royal College of Nursing has welcomed this important step in



high quality patient care depends on the skills and experiences of nurses, a safe environment and safe nursing numbers

protecting patients and improving health care. The delivery of high quality patient care depends on the skills and experiences of nurses delivered in a safe environment with safe nursing numbers.

We have long campaigned for safe nurse staffing levels to be enshrined in law. Evidence clearly shows that when nursing levels fall to an unsafe point, stays in hospital are longer and falls, infections and other complications rise. When the numbers of nurses on a ward are too low, incidents of pressure sores, lack of communication and mistakes administering medication rise.

In California, where a similar law was introduced, 30-day mortality rates fell by between 10 and 13 per cent. The RCN in Wales has campaigned for seven years to introduce legislation on nurse staffing - we believe the proposed new law will greatly improve patient safety and provide patients of the Welsh NHS with the nursing care and attention they deserve.

Retired RCN member Richard Jones MBE also submitted an e-petition on the Assembly website which garnered a staggering 1,679 signatures. A further 300 individuals wrote in to the Health and Social Care Committee to back this proposed Bill. With this strong sign of

support from the general public, Assembly Members have taken note of how passionately the people of Wales feel in supporting the NHS and its workers.

Our members tell us how important this proposed law is:

“Not having enough staff on wards can only lead to mistakes. Mistakes can be costly. We’re in the business of life and death sometimes. It is imperative that this Bill is made into a law.”

“Nurses need to be protected. I work in a pressure cooker and each day I am worried about understaffing and losing my registration because I’ve made a mistake.”

When a nurse is running among 12 different patients, he or she will not have time to notice a subtle change in a patient’s condition that indicates a serious problem is about to happen. When a nurse can’t give prescribed medication on time, a patient may develop a serious infection or suffer pain as a result.

Often nurses will write to us at the RCN to tell us about very distressing situations they have had to cope with. One nurse wrote to us to say that she and two other nurses (one of whom was an agency nurse and therefore new to the ward) had to look after 28 patients. One patient was very confused and two needed strict constant observations. This meant the three nurses could not offer the other 25 patients the help with eating or drinking they would have liked to. The nurse who wrote to us was particularly upset because some of these patients had continence needs and she was not given the time to change their pads



Kirsty Williams

appropriately. The anxiety that many nurses feel when they are pressured by management into giving less than the best care they want to give can become unbearable.

Kirsty Williams AM’s ‘Safe Nurse Staffing Levels (Wales) Bill’ is the opportunity for Wales to lead the way in UK health care, by enshrining safe staffing levels in law. Nurses in Wales have spoken personally to family, friends and neighbours in support of this Bill and many of them have been very surprised to find that we do not currently have this legislation already within the NHS in Wales. Without a law like this our lives and the lives of those we care about are being put at risk. The bill will improve patient care and ensure better outcomes - the safety of patients in Wales should not be ignored.

Find out more at <http://tinyurl.com/contactAMS>

Housing *John Puzey*

John Puzey is Director of Shelter Cymru



Working together to reduce homelessness

At the end of April this year, the National Assembly for Wales introduced a distinctive way of dealing with homelessness. The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 created new duties for local authorities to help prevent homelessness for anyone who asks for help.

The philosophy of this new approach is based on partnership working with other agencies and, crucially, real partnerships with people facing homelessness. The aim is to work with people to help them design their own solutions, looking not just at immediate housing problems but also at any underlying issues and intervening early wherever possible to prevent people's situations escalating. Unlike the previous legal framework, pretty much unchanged since its introduction in 1977, the new Welsh Act requires local authorities to respond to all people facing or experiencing homelessness, rather than just those who fall into 'priority groups'.

At the same time, the Housing Act made other major changes to the rights of people facing homelessness – some of which are less positive. The removal of an automatic priority need for prison leavers and allowing local authorities to discharge homelessness duties with an offer of private rented accommodation without the consent of the applicant is seen by some as a retrograde step. Others see it as the price of a more universal system which seeks to prevent homelessness as early and as quickly as possible.

Changing the legal framework by itself will not guarantee this new approach will work. A significant change in culture of all agencies involved in preventing homelessness is crucial – particularly in terms of the relationship between local authorities and homeless applicants which can often be characterised as

mistrustful and adversarial.

Shelter Cymru advisors and local authority homelessness teams are being encouraged to develop local working protocols which outline how they will collaborate in the interests of people in housing need. These working arrangements also underpin the vital principle of third sector independence and constructive challenge when necessary. Social landlords also have new legal duties to co-operate in the prevention of homelessness.

These are fundamental changes. Inevitably it will take time to embed new ways of working. However, it is crucial that people facing homelessness should not have to suffer poor service because their housing crisis happens to fall during a period of transition.

We reviewed our casework evidence to see how services have responded during these critical first two months. What we found was largely positive: services working more closely together, keeping the people using services well informed, and using resources in innovative ways to prevent homelessness. We also found, however, some examples where services had not been delivered well. In these cases the outcomes for people using services could be extremely poor.

Shelter Cymru has campaigned for years for local authorities to develop Personal Housing Plans in partnership with users – a plan which sets out how their housing issue will be resolved and who is responsible for making it happen. The Welsh Government has made it clear that, from the start of the new legislation, they expect all authorities to be working with people in housing need to develop these plans.

Most authorities have embraced this new approach - indeed it is driving good behaviour in terms of a more constructive relationship between services and users,

and we have had really positive feedback from some of our clients. Some authorities are going into a lot of detail and the plans are clear and easy to understand.

Another area of good practice is in the use of 'spend to save' prevention funds – previously these were only used by some authorities but now, with the advent of new legislation, are being used by all.

Already there have been very positive examples of homelessness prevention money being used to assist



people with nowhere else to turn for help. Many authorities are using their funds to help clear arrears and raise rent in advance. But we've also seen money being used in innovative ways. Some authorities are clearly open to using prevention funds in whatever way is likely to secure a good outcome for the customer.

For example, Shelter Cymru asked one local authority to pay the £525 fee to allow a client to declare bankruptcy and avoid losing her home. Our client had a Suspended Possession Order which was preventing her downsizing to more affordable accommodation, and although she was trying hard to address her arrears they were still growing.

We highlighted what it would cost the local authority if she and her children had to present as homeless, and the authority agreed to pay the fee. The same authority also paid a Debt Relief Order fee to help another family stay in their home.

Partnership working is a further area where we've seen improvements. It's been a long journey but it seems that most of the various homelessness agencies in Wales are making good progress on working more closely together.

More authorities are consulting our caseworkers in advance of making decisions about what duty is owed to



... there have been very positive examples of homelessness prevention money being used to assist people with nowhere else to turn for help



The welfare benefit cuts and the continuing squeeze on public spending increase the difficulties faced by many Welsh citizens already struggling in poverty and housing need

local authorities would deter people from making homelessness applications by suggesting that it was not worth doing as they would be found ‘intentionally’ homeless anyway or were not in ‘priority need’, even though a formal assessment of need and vulnerability had not taken place.

What a relief, then, that the new law effectively took those gates down by requiring that everyone is helped within the statutory framework, but what a disappointment when we still hear from some of our users that they have been advised the local authority does not owe them any duties because they are not in priority need.

These are isolated cases, but they mean that some people are not getting the help and support they need and should have now under law. The sooner all local authorities get up to

speed on this new approach the better.

Finally, it’s pretty tough preventing homelessness when there are other impacts crashing in on us from outside Wales. The welfare benefit cuts and the continuing squeeze on public spending increase the difficulties faced by many Welsh citizens already struggling in poverty and housing need. So it is important that all those services and organisations that are accountable to the Welsh people play their part.

Social housing is, of course, a key player. After all, they are the ones who we are all relying on to provide more affordable homes. Many social landlords have done excellent work helping tenants to sustain their tenancies. But a few seem to be developing a more ‘commercial’ approach; taking to court tenants with relatively small arrears which then increase with court costs; evicting tents during probationary tenancy periods when they are unable to ask the court to take into consideration the reasons for their arrears. Some social landlords are now asking for rent in advance, aping the private rented sector. It is clear that we need to fundamentally consider how we support social housing in Wales if we are to avoid an even greater housing crisis than we have already got.

It also doesn’t help the homelessness prevention agenda in Wales if, for example, Council Tax officials go after people with low arrears and take them to court, or Housing Benefit departments decide to review all claims, cancel some and then reinstate them after interventions from advice agencies.

The Welsh Government needs to send a very clear message that during these times of austerity and increasing poverty public services in Wales need to show solidarity with citizens, finding constructive, long-term solutions to people’s needs.

an applicant. One authority called us into their office to discuss whether a particular individual, who was living in a tent, should be considered to be in priority need. Following this discussion the person was offered emergency accommodation, thus avoiding a legal challenge.

Two authorities now have Shelter Cymru caseworkers embedded in their teams and are consulting them regularly in order to ensure they make the right decisions at the outset and avoid difficulties later on.

But while we’ve seen some encouraging trends, bad habits die hard. I suppose it is inevitable that in the early days of such a fundamental change that not everyone will be running at the same speed. But certain issues suggest that some are running backwards.

It’s common sense that the earlier you are able to help someone facing homelessness the more likely you are to prevent it. The new law extends the period of ‘threatened with homelessness’, during which authorities are required to intervene, from 28 days to 56 days before the possible loss of accommodation. Authorities however are encouraged to be even more flexible than this and start working with people as soon as possible.

It was a shock, therefore, when a Shelter Cymru client recently reported that they had been turned away by an authority, even though they had a notice from their landlord, and told to come back when court proceedings had been issued. No, this is not how it is supposed to work. Trying to resolve an issue at the last possible moment is likely to fail, the person concerned will have court costs to pay as well as having unnecessarily gone through the trauma of this form of imposed brinkmanship.

One of the key ‘battle’ areas under the previous legal framework was ‘gatekeeping’, the idea that sometimes

Housing *Stuart Ropke*

Stuart Ropke is Group Chief Executive of the Community Housing Cymru Group



What will the Summer 2015 Budget mean for social housing tenants across Wales?

Just eight weeks after achieving a majority victory, the Conservative Government has outlined the first fully Conservative budget for 19 years. The main objective of George Osborne's budget was to cut the welfare bill by £12bn - a commitment they made in their pre-election manifesto.

Changes such as a freeze in working age benefits and abolishing the automatic entitlement to Housing Benefit for under 21s were referred to in the Queen's Speech, but many more changes to welfare were announced on Budget Day.

The headline welfare changes are:

- Automatic entitlement to housing benefit for 18 to 21 year olds will be abolished for new claims from April 2017.
- From April 2016, Housing Benefit claims will be backdated for a maximum of 4 weeks.
- The benefit cap will be reduced to £20k from £26k in Wales, from April 2017.
- Working age benefits will be frozen for 4 years (this includes working and child tax credits).
- The rates for the Work Related Activity Group within Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) will be brought in line with Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) for new claims from April 2017.
- Child tax credits (Universal Credit) will be limited to two children from April 2017 for any new claimants and existing claimants who have more children after 2017.

Wales is a relatively low wage economy and the creation of a 'National Living Wage' (£9 by 2020) and the recognition that the current minimum wage falls short is welcome. However, Wales has already been disproportionately affected by welfare reforms in comparison to the rest of the UK and the breadth of the reforms announced in the Summer Budget is worrying.

This is a tough budget for working families and young people, and many are likely to feel the brunt of the cuts. The Institute of Fiscal Studies has calculated that 13 million families across the UK could lose an average of

£260 per year due to tax credit reductions: the National Living Wage is unlikely to make up for the reduction in tax credits.

The lowering of the benefit cap to £20,000 from £26,000 was anticipated before the budget announcement. We estimate that around 7,000 families in Wales, 2,240 of which live in social housing, could be affected. A cap of £20,000 could see an out-of-work family of two adults and three children lose an average of £3,200 per year. In many parts of Wales, families will not be able to pay high private rents because of the cap, resulting in more demand than ever for affordable housing. We have a Housing Supply Pact with Welsh Government and an affordable housing target of 10,000 homes in this Government term, and we will continue to lobby for further investment in housing supply.

The UK Government's decision to end the automatic entitlement to Housing Benefit for 18-21 year olds could see up to 4,100 young people affected in Wales.

Housing Benefit is a lifeline for so many vulnerable young people who don't have the option of relying on their family, and the effect on this age group will be considerable. Many housing associations run schemes for under 21 year olds and they are deeply concerned about how young people will survive without Housing Benefit when they leave these schemes.

It is clear that there will be challenges ahead for tenants across Wales. Community Housing Cymru is committed to continuing to work with Welsh Government to ensure that desperately needed support and affordable housing is available, as well as supporting tenants by working closely with our members.





A radical approach to public services

The early months of the UK Government have firmly established a course of spending and policy choices that will put the survival of a public service ethos to its greatest test yet. Public services, owned by the public and delivered by a workforce which is treated fairly, exist as an audacious principle against the ideological zeal of those determined to use a financial crisis to meet dogmatic ends.

We have to be radical in stating why our values are best, and have the confidence to act on them. Mitigating the impact of cuts with the principles of collectivism and solidarity has been a major task which hasn't always worked well enough. We now need a long term, workforce-based approach that prioritises the skills, experience and ability of workers to deliver our services above short term cutbacks.

November 2010 saw an historic decision by the Wales TUC Special Conference to work in 'social partnership' with the Welsh Government. This partnership working has been designed to identify ways of managing with a decreased budget while protecting jobs and services.

The First Minister gave this firm commitment to that Conference:

"I want to see best practice being shared and delivered across Welsh public services and that includes best practice in employee relations. Engagement, negotiation and agreement – not diktat. I want the Welsh way of Government – employers and unions working together to seek solutions – to be the only way in Welsh public services. And this means sticking to our principles – no two tier workforce, no knee jerk outsourcing, commitments to fair terms if transfers take place, and a continued adherence to our workforce code of practice from all sides..."

Five years later, we find ourselves at a crucial point in this process. A plethora of documents, agreements, strategies and reviews has been published along the way:

- a voluntary memorandum of understanding agreed to protect jobs and services in local government in 2011
- a strategic framework for the Public Service Workforce in Wales in 2012
- a green paper on Working Together in Wales: The Public Service Workforce in Wales
- a paper on Partnership and Managing Change 2012
- the Williams Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery 2013-2014
- a draft Public Services (Workforce) (Wales) Bill 2013
- a white paper on a Public Services Staff Commission 2014

This list does not include the many sector-specific consultations, draft bills and agreements across public services.

Where has this got us?

The Wales TUC has an unambiguous aim for public services: to keep them in the hands of the public. It is only by ensuring that our dedicated workforce are properly protected and engaged that those services will withstand the processes of reorganisation going on across the public sector.

334,000 people were employed in the public sector in Wales in 2013. By the first quarter of 2015 this figure fell to 299,000 - a 5.9% reduction. The figures include devolved and non-devolved public services and this trend is only set to continue. Without leadership and support from the Welsh Government to protect the public sector workforce, the threat of job losses on the scale seen across England looms large.

Over the last five years, the Wales TUC has continued to work in social partnership with the Welsh Government and the public service employers in Wales, including local authorities. Increasingly this has become extraordinarily difficult resulting in the threat, and sometimes reality, of strikes - often where individual employers have undermined partnership and collective solutions, believing their immediate concerns to be more important. Despite this, the trade union movement has worked in good faith throughout its engagement on tough issues.

Significant gains should not be underestimated. The Welsh Government decision to shield local government from the extreme cuts seen over the border has saved jobs at a crucial time for our services, communities and



Public services must remain public. Their value lies in their universal availability... We cannot leave that to the market.

economy. The UK Coalition Government withdrew the Two Tier Workforce Code in 2010 but the Welsh Government consistently stated its support for the Welsh Code and issued a revised version in 2014. We have supported this development (although we do believe it is not strong enough) as it demonstrates a commitment to protecting the public service workforce in circumstances when outsourcing is being widely considered.

It underpins the view that the First Minister set out when he launched the Williams Commission in 2013:

“Public services must remain public. Their value lies in their universal availability... We cannot leave that to the market. If we turned public services into commodities, provided them competitively and allocated them according to the ability to pay, we would destroy what we have sought to preserve. That is not my agenda.”

The biggest challenge facing a reducing workforce has yet to be properly addressed. The Williams Commission report acknowledges the scale of the challenge in Wales stating:

“...austerity is likely to continue for at least the next decade... As matters stand, local authorities will be unable to offset such pressures with the scale of long-term savings that merger is very likely to bring. So the choice becomes either one of prolonged and ultimately

unsustainable cuts to frontline jobs and services; or investing in a reformed structure which will yield significant long-term savings and so mitigate the need for service cuts. In our view that is no choice at all: it is infinitely preferable to invest in a public sector that is fit for the future and to protect front-line jobs and services than to allow public services to decay and decline to the point of failure.”

Last September the Leader of Birmingham City Council, Sir Albert Bore, in confirming 6,000 jobs were to be lost over 4 years said:

“Colleagues, there is a ticking time bomb under this city council. Over many years we have not given enough attention to how we manage staff reductions and plan the workforce we will need in the future. If we don't act now then the consequences will be catastrophic for the future functioning of this organisation.”

These quotes get to the heart of what we have been trying to address. It is not enough for us to sit back and watch voluntary redundancy programme after voluntary redundancy programme, reductions in overtime payments and mileage allowances. This tinkering around the edges has done nothing to address the fundamental question – what do we want our public services in Wales to look like?

Workforce planning across the public services and across Wales has got to be the answer. Without a consistent and coherent view of the services that need to be delivered - and the staff required to deliver them - then the future of Wales' public services looks bleak. The Welsh Government has consistently argued for a 'One Wales Public Service'; they have not yet fully articulated what they want this to look like.

We remain optimistic that the proposal by the Welsh Government to establish a statutory Public Services Staff Commission is the way to ensure an ambitious future for our public services. We are working hard to ensure this new body will deliver for the public sector workforce and the public who depend upon these vital services.

We will be testing the Commission and the Welsh Government to deliver at a time when so much is at stake.



Welsh Language *Delyth Jewell*

Delyth Jewell is Policy Officer at Citizens Advice Cymru



Service providers should tackle Welsh language standards head-on

Since 2011, the Welsh language has had official status in Wales. In the coming years, service providers will need to scrutinise their Welsh language services because of the new Welsh Language Commissioner's standards which are likely to apply to them. The elephant in the room in these discussions is that the take-up of Welsh language services remains low in many sectors, leaving service providers with a quandary: why invest in services which are not being used in the first place?

For the past year, Citizens Advice Cymru has been researching this issue. The background is complex. At the time of the last census in 2011, 19 per cent of the population of Wales said that they could speak Welsh, yet there is an undeniable disconnect between this figure and the bewilderingly low numbers of people who actually use Welsh language services. The census showed

a small – but significant – decrease in the numbers of Welsh speakers recorded a decade earlier.

In the same year, the Welsh Assembly passed the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, which set out that people living in Wales should be able to live their lives in Welsh, and, crucially, that Welsh should be treated no less favourably than English. The Measure also made way for the post of a Welsh Language Commissioner, who is now drafting new Welsh language standards which will apply to public services and certain private sector services which receive over £400,000 of public money per annum.

So why is it that so few Welsh speakers use the services which are provided for them?

Citizens Advice Cymru's report, *English by Default*, suggests that the barriers which can prevent Welsh speakers from using these services are both structural



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and behavioural. Structural barriers derive from the way in which services are presented to consumers – that is, the way in which they’re designed and promoted. Such barriers can include longer waiting times on Welsh language phone lines and difficult-to-find Welsh language options on websites.

Behavioural barriers, though more abstract, are every bit as important – and can comprise people’s perceptions of Welsh language services, negative past experiences and their attitudes to the language.

Research would suggest that if a Welsh speaker has

encountered problems in accessing services in the past, they’re less likely to want to use that service again; similarly, if a Welsh speaker expects a service to be difficult to use, they’re unlikely to use it.

Service providers will need to tackle each of these barriers head-on when they re-evaluate their Welsh language provision. And re-evaluate them they must. Although discussions are on-going as to which of the Welsh Language Commissioner’s standards will apply to which sectors, we know that Welsh speakers will be able to expect phone calls and correspondence with relevant suppliers in Welsh, and that websites, signs and slogans should be bilingual.

For service providers that already operate a Welsh language scheme, much of the groundwork will already be done. Those organisations will need to review those schemes to see if they still meet the needs of Welsh speakers (and, indeed, whether their Welsh services are being used). For companies that have not previously had any such scheme, the coming months and years may well entail a reconfiguring of how services are pitched, monitored and used. The prospect of new language standards should prompt a fundamental re-evaluation of customer engagement.

This need not necessarily prove to be a hindrance. Rather, the advent of new standards should bring an opportunity for service providers to re-engage with Welsh speakers, and to find out what services they would value, and to try and improve the take-up of the services they offer.

There is little point in investing money and resources into renewing services which won’t be used because they’re not promoted adequately, because the language used is not appropriate for the intended audience, or

because accessing those services is more difficult than simply using English.

Default languages are an important piece of the puzzle. Research has shown that 93 per cent of Welsh speakers would be more likely to use a Welsh language service if that service were offered upfront, as opposed to having to seek it out actively. Behavioural economics and nudge theory come into play in this regard, in that service providers may need to prompt people into using Welsh language services by giving them a prominent platform; indeed, service providers may find it useful to make Welsh the default language with some options. Certainly, service providers are unlikely to see any increase in take-up of their Welsh language services if they do not offer the choice of continuing in Welsh at the start of a customer’s interaction with their services.

Above all else, the new standards present a chance for consumers to be placed at the heart of service delivery. Service providers should make efforts to ask Welsh speakers for their views of their services, for example by commissioning focus groups and forums. This could in turn inform changes to their service provision and ensure they’re meeting the needs of the market.

Organisations should keep in mind that Welsh-speaking consumers are consumers first and foremost – and that they want to access help and information quickly, efficiently and without fuss. Indeed, addressing their wishes will pay dividends in customer loyalty and satisfaction: – 82 per cent of the Welsh speakers surveyed as part of Citizens Advice’s recent research said that they would be more likely to choose a company that boasted a good Welsh language service.

The coming months and years offer a genuine prospect for reassessing the way in which organisations interact with the public in Wales. Service providers should be welcoming the opportunity with outstretched arms.



Equality Ian Thomas

Ian Thomas is Chief Executive of Age Cymru and was previously Head of Scope Cymru.



Making Wales truly age-friendly

The concept of ‘age-friendly’ is not a new one. There are many variations on a simple definition of age-friendly, such as that developed in Canada which states:

“In an age friendly community, the policies, services and structures related to the physical and social environment are designed to help seniors ‘age actively’. In other words, the community is set up to help seniors live safely, enjoy good health and stay involved.”

Age Cymru is embarking on an ambitious programme to deliver an age-friendly Wales. Our purpose is to ensure that older people are able to live the most fulfilled lives possible in communities across Wales. The changes we identify need to be sustainable, rooted in Welsh culture and supported by government at all levels. It is unashamedly based upon achieving social and cultural transformation for older people in Wales.

Change is vital at a time when the number of older people in Wales is growing and we are, on average, expected to live longer than any previous generation. Currently many older people are marginalised by poverty, isolation, cultural stereotyping, physical barriers in communities, and a lack of opportunity. Demographic shifts mean it has never been more important to re-position older people as important members of and contributors to our society. We need to celebrate ageing as a positive transition while keeping our older citizens involved in civic and community life.

There is already a large body of work underway globally in relation to ‘age-friendly’, and Wales itself has begun to embrace this through the Ageing Well in Wales programme, run through the Older People’s Commissioner for Wales. Within the UK and arguably Europe, Wales led the way in the development of the Welsh Government’s Strategy for Older

People. This has provided a firm foundation on which to build, and the opportunity to make things the best they can be for older people. The establishment of the Older People’s Commissioner was also a positive step in keeping issues of age high on the political and strategic agendas. While Wales has been ahead of the curve for fifteen years, we need now to maintain and enhance that position. We need to link Wales more closely with the global age-friendly movement and turn all the aspirations, and all the learning already achieved, into real change for our older citizens.

Embedding age-friendly principles and practices will also help the Welsh Government to realise the aspirations it has set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act. There is a real need for all the potentially disparate strands to knit together in order to achieve meaningful change, not just for older people in Wales now, but also for future generations. Real investment for Wales will not only benefit our older citizens of today, but also the older citizens of our coming decades.

For Wales to become truly age-friendly, it must transform the circumstances of older people in both public and private domains. It is not enough to just change the environment, we must also achieve equal rights for older people and ensure that older citizens have appropriate information, advice and advocacy. The environment and public space will always be important for all of us, and ensuring that older people can benefit from an appropriate public space will mean less isolation and more opportunity for involvement. This should not be within only our public buildings and spaces, but also those in the business and private sectors.

With the rise in the retirement age, people now in their early fifties will be working longer, and future generations will be working longer still. The older workforce should have available to it good opportunities to develop within the workplace, and be free from discrimination due to



For Wales to become truly age-friendly, it must transform the circumstances of older people in both public and private domains



age. There is, as there always has been, an opportunity to benefit from the experience that older people bring to the workplace, and this should be viewed as a positive thing for business and the economy.

Quality health and social care, so important for the whole population, must be developed on the basis of understanding the needs of older citizens. All services must be geared to meet the needs and challenges that an ageing population will bring. Integration of health and social services remains an issue, and other important life-affecting areas, such as housing, need to be brought into the fold also.

The majority of older people in Wales will live their lives out in their communities: appropriate housing and transport are important so that people can be safe, secure and mobile within and between communities. Loneliness and isolation are real issues for many in Wales, and lack of transport and community resources only add to these problems. Appropriate housing, and options to change housing as people's needs change, should be available. The quality of housing should be a high priority because of the impact that poor housing has on its occupants and ultimately on the health service.

Not surprisingly, we need freedom from poverty and to be financially-included to live happy and healthy lives. Those on low incomes often face dilemmas about how

they use their limited resources, with choices being as stark as eating or heating. Poverty is also a major factor in the creation of poor health, which affects the health and social care budgets.

Age Cymru believes that Wales could be the first truly age-friendly country in Europe. To do so we need to embark on a programme of social and cultural change that should permeate all aspects of our society. The principles need to be embedded widely in both the public and private domains, including within government programmes, school curriculums, business practices and social care and health systems. Being age-friendly should be synonymous with good business and great public services, serving generations to come. Age Cymru knows that it cannot achieve this vision alone, and we need to work with partners old and new. We recognise our place as one of the agents of change, and our vision is of a genuinely 'age-friendly Wales'.

The opportunity to make Wales an age-friendly country should be attractive to people and organisations across Wales, whether in the private, public, education or any other sector. Being age-friendly will benefit the social, economic and cultural life of Wales now and for the future and keep Wales in the forefront of innovation and aspirations for our older citizens across Europe and the world.

Showcase *David Pugh*

David Pugh,
Chief Executive
of PRIME Cymru,
outlines a new
approach to help
older people to
find work.



Mentor now!

PRIME Cymru, The Prince's Initiative for Mature Enterprise in Wales, is the specialist Welsh charity that helps people aged 50 or over get into work. We are urging people to 'mentor now', by volunteering a little time to help improve Welsh lives.

PRIME Cymru runs the largest and most successful mentoring programme in Wales, matching over 360 volunteer mentors to mature individuals who want to work – through volunteering, finding a job or starting up a business. Mentor Now will increase the number of mentors to 500 by the end of 2015.

Mentors are recruited as volunteers from all types of

career backgrounds. Their knowledge, experience or specific expertise in employment, business or the voluntary sector is of great help in offering direct support to work-seekers, but they also need an interest in helping other people to grow and flourish. With not far short of a quarter of a million jobless people between the age of 50 and state pension age, mentoring has a significant positive impact on individuals' lives as well as the local economy.

PRIME Cymru volunteer mentors fulfil a vital role. Without our mentors we couldn't offer our support to hundreds of clients who need our help throughout



Wales. Mentors join a great team dedicated to improving people's lives and helping Wales prosper and grow. It's straightforward, flexible and can be a lot of fun. We make sure that mentors receive professional mentor training and on-going support from PRIME Cymru staff. Mentors choose how much time they want to give – from a few hours a week, to a few hours a year. **Mentor Now** and together we can make it work for people in their prime.

Click on www.primecymru/mentoring to download a mentor application pack, or call us now on 0800 587 4085, or email mentoring@primecymru.co.uk.

A Mentor's Experience

Aviation expert and long-time businessman from Pencoed, Teg Bevan, has been a PRIME Cymru volunteer mentor for over 7 years, supporting a number of clients with business start-ups, including Nicola Mundež – a stay-at-home, single mother of three, from Maesteg. Teg mentored Nicola, offering one-to-one support when she set out to develop her interest in faith art into a small business, Art from the Heart.

Talking about the importance of mentoring people over 50, Teg said:

"I'm lucky to have worked all my life. I'm over seventy now and I still travel the world with my consultancy work. My interests and general hobbies are also quite diverse, so I have a lot of experience and hopefully wisdom to pass on. I'm inspired to volunteer as a mentor for PRIME Cymru, because I feel life and work skills should be shared, and not left behind. Especially if it can be put to good use in motivating and guiding people to future employment or business set up. Age shouldn't be a barrier to success, and people over 50 have such a lot of life experience and skills to offer.

"The mentor/client relationship is a two-way process that, when well developed through trust and mutual understanding, can benefit both. The confidence, respect and well-being people create for themselves when moving forward cannot be measured, whether it's moving towards volunteering, finding a job, or maybe turning a hobby into a viable business proposition. It's so inspiring to witness the change as people flourish. Of course, working is about earning a living, or creating wealth, but there's more to it than that. Mentoring is about enabling people to take control of their own destiny, at a time when they may feel their future work opportunities are limited.

"Nicola is a great example of this. Not only has she started her own art business and become self-employed, she was runner up in the Mentorsme Excellence in Enterprise Mentoring Awards 2014, against stiff competition from other enterprises throughout the UK. That was an excellent result for us both.

"I achieve a great deal of personal satisfaction in supporting and promoting the building of self-esteem and confidence in mature people who are seeking new purpose and direction in their lives, and the PRIME Cymru mentoring scheme is an ideal way to do this. I urge people who think they could help in the same way, to **MENTOR NOW**".

Showcase *Tim Banks & Maura Matthews*

Tim Banks is Research Officer and Maura Matthews is Health and Wellbeing Development Manager at Tenovus Cancer Care.



Here comes the sun

Skin cancer is a major killer. In Wales around 150 people die from skin cancer and there are approximately 700 new cases each year. Between 2000 and 2012 the number of cases of malignant melanoma rose by 75 per cent. This contrasts with Australia, where substantial advertising campaigns and changes to public attitude have brought skin cancer rates under control.

Tenovus Cancer Care's Here Comes the Sun campaign aims to address Wales' skin cancer problem. Our charity shops and community pharmacies were used as a base to have conversations with customers about skin cancer. A quiz given to customers tested knowledge of the dangers of the sun and skin cancer whilst also asking

about the individual's sun safety habits. A follow-up conversation with a trained volunteer then used the information to discuss sun safety habits and ways of changing behaviour. In addition, our ice-cream van, equipped to distribute sun cream around Wales, also delivered sun safety messages at events such as the IPC Athletics European Championships, where people were potentially exposed to the sun. Altogether we distributed sun cream and spoke about sun safety to approximately 6,500 of people. It is the largest sun safety campaign ever undertaken in Wales.

The findings suggested that overall knowledge of sun safety was good. For example, over half of respondents were aware that being sunburnt as a child can double the



people in lower socio-economic groups have lower knowledge of sun safety and are likely to have “risky behaviours

chances of skin cancer. But knowledge did not translate into behaviours: a quarter reported one episode of sunburn and 14 per cent reported having been burnt on more than one occasion. Risky behaviours were particularly common amongst people in deprived areas - sunbed use was very high amongst this group of people.

Encouragingly, 43 percent of those we spoke to said they were going to change their behaviour in the sun. Taking the message out of the traditional clinical environment and engaging with individuals where high risk behaviours take place seems to improve the chances of getting the message across.

Future campaigns should be targeted, focussing on

specific issues where there is the chance of greatest change. Overall, skin cancer differs from other types of cancer in that the greatest incidence is amongst higher socio-economic groups. However, this group tends to present at an earlier stage of cancer, which is strongly related to increased odds of survival. People in lower socio-economic groups have lower knowledge of sun safety and are likely to have “risky behaviours.” Sunbed use is a very good example of this. The Here Comes the Sun 2015 campaign will focus on providing information and influencing sun bed use in communities where there are higher levels of socio-economic deprivation.

Skin cancer is on the rise, yet it is a highly preventable disease. Huge gains could be made by using innovative methods to encourage behaviour change. The change in public attitudes and behaviour needs to be supported by Welsh Government. We are impressed by the commitment of clinicians and organisations like Community Pharmacy, but we need to create an environment that helps people to make better choices. The Welsh Government’s powers to regulate businesses are limited, so the efficacy of health messaging, for example on windows and equipment in tanning salons, needs to be evaluated. In addition, schools should work with third sector organisations to deliver sun safety messages to children.

Be sun safe

- Always use suncream with a minimum SPF 15 which also contains good UVA protection (the more stars the better).
- Check the expiry date.
- Apply suncream 30 minutes before going out in the sun and then every two hours.
- Stay in the shade between 11am – 3pm and wear a hat, t-shirt and sunglasses when you are in the sun.
- Teach your children to look after their skin. Keep babies under the age of 12 months out of the sun and protect older children.
- NEVER use tanning beds as they damage DNA!
- If you work outdoors you are particularly at risk.





Health *Jonathan Richards*

Jonathan Richards has worked as a general practitioner in Merthyr Tydfil for more than thirty years. He is Locality Clinical Director at Cwm Taf University Health Board and a Visiting Professor of Primary Care at the University of South Wales. He writes in a personal capacity.

First in the queue

Tony Blair has been blamed for many things. Raymond Tallis, the philosopher and writer, wrote in 2005 that Tony Blair changed the way in which people thought about the NHS by making promises during an election campaign: “Everyone was led to expect that they would be first in the queue.” He went on to make some insightful comments about the impossibility of

delivering a Health Service where on each occasion everyone could be the first in the queue. Access to the National Health Service continues to be a headline political issue in England and in Wales.

Politicians are promising access seven days a week, access on the day you would like it and access to tests and specialists without a wait. They are

more circumspect about access to expensive medications. I have been at meetings where civil servants and others have talked about 24-hour banking and shopping as examples of what is to be expected of the Health Service and what should be delivered by those working for the Health Service. I wonder in what senses Health Service provision could or should be compared to commercial





Internet and information technology can now provide ways of addressing the many and various agendas that people have when wanting to access the NHS

operations.

I was helped in my early working life by learning from research that demonstrated that people had a number of agendas when they made their appointment. They wanted assessment, investigation and referral but in addition:

- They wanted information.
- They had ideas about what was causing their symptoms or more detailed opinions and their own knowledge and experience; they had their own perspectives and expertise to bring to the consultation.
- They had reached the limit of toleration of pain or of worry about what the symptoms might mean.
- They wanted to provide information to the general practitioner or the nurse.

Consultations were less effective and successful when the doctor or the nurse did not explore all of the agendas that had been brought by the patient. I found that, once I had discovered what people wanted dealt with, I understood them better and it was easier to accept their rationale for making the appointment.

Healthcare has changed in important ways since many appointments are now required to monitor and support people living with long term conditions and to provide education and prevention services. A recent YouGov poll reported that 54% of respondents wanted the Government to make weekend access to the GP a priority. I have not heard politicians specify which services they wish general practitioners to provide in a seven day way.

It may be possible to find ways of solving the mismatches between demand and access to services by considering how to rethink and reorganise services to meet the needs and agendas of both people and the service in question.

Firstly, there are people living with long term conditions or caring for relatives with long term conditions who cannot get time off work to attend for reviews during routine surgery hours. Others travel long distances to and from work and will have to take significant time away from work to attend for their routine care. The services that these people require could be delivered outside of surgery hours by doctors, nurses and healthcare support workers in a number of ways as a component of the Welsh Government's Cluster Network Development initiative. Different ways of delivering the services will suit different settings and contexts. Cluster Network Development is expected to address local needs and to provide solutions to problems that people experience accessing NHS Services. It will be interesting to discover how many Clusters, if any, across Wales have decided that this is a priority for them.

Secondly, the internet and information technology can now provide ways of addressing the many and various agendas

that people have when wanting to access the NHS. For example, there are reliable information sites available for many conditions with self-help guides and videos; doctors and nurses can interact with people using email and telephone advice can deal with many questions and concerns. 'Symptom sorters' are interactive pathways that people can use to work through their symptoms and concerns. At the end of the process, the user is directed to the appropriate and relevant choice: an information site, an email or telephone consultation or a face to face consultation with the most appropriate clinician.

Such a system reports that half of all contacts with Primary Care are "managed remotely" and 1 in 3 site visitors use self-help tools. Reported satisfaction levels by patients and by clinicians are remarkably high. Such a system may be adopted by your general practice soon!

My concerns are that people do value consultations where they can interact and explore their concerns with a trusted clinician; not everyone values or will benefit from a consumer approach to their health care. I am also concerned that such systems will increase inequality as a consequence of literacy and numeracy issues for some and access to the internet for others. Also, the system is not designed for people living through hard times with complex lives and a multiplicity of difficulties and problems.

However, if the articulate and competent majority find that the system meets their needs and pressured Primary Care Teams find that their working lives become more manageable and sustainable, the New World is here to stay. ■



Housing *Duncan Forbes*

Duncan Forbes is the Chief Executive of Bron Afon Community Housing, a community owned social enterprise and registered social landlord in Torfaen.

A 'low welfare' Wales?

The Summer 2015 budget has already generated a lot of stress and anxiety amongst our tenants.

Young people have taken a message from the budget that they no longer "deserve" to be housed. We have had young people who are under 21 contacting us in tears, worrying about their futures and their security in their home. One young man is worried that he will end up sleeping back in the underground car park where he was "housed" just a few months ago before we gave him a real home. Not really the message we want to give to the younger generation, especially those with whom we are working hardest to give them a sense of hope and aspiration. You can't get a job when sleeping in a car park.

Then there is the story of Alice (not her real name) who is one of our tenants. Alice is a single parent with three daughters and a son, aged between eighteen months and 10 years. Her first husband died in a car accident. Her second beat her up and abused her. She has moved from her home town to escape him. She is isolated, lonely and anxious, and is being prescribed medication by her GP for depression. One of her daughters is reluctant to attend school and is at risk of being excluded. Social workers have concerns about Alice's ability to protect and care for her children because of her mental health, and the children are on the Child Protection Register. Nevertheless, Alice provides a loving home and is able to put the children's needs before her own. At present, there is equilibrium and Alice is coping. The children are doing OK.

Alice currently receives just over

£24,500 per year in benefits. She says that she doesn't "live" she "survives". She has free-to-view TV. She has no car or computer; no access to the internet. She engages in no leisure activity, relying on free swimming for her children provided by the local authority. She and the children never have a holiday. She has no companionship and no "fun" in her life whatsoever. She does not smoke or drink. She occasionally goes without food for a day so she can pay for other necessities for the children. She is the world's most expert manager of household money.

As a result of the budget, Alice will lose over £4,500 from her annual income (about £86 per week) due to the new £20,000 Benefit Cap. I am using this year's figures though the Cap won't be introduced until 2017. This £86 will come from her housing benefit that pays her rent and she will be expected to find her rent from her other income. If she doesn't pay, as seems likely, she will be at risk of eviction. Whilst we can cope with one tenant who doesn't pay

their rent, the Benefit Cap will affect hundreds of our tenants in one of the areas in Britain with the lowest rents. Where can they go then?

Our work with Alice shows that nothing can give from her household budget so she will almost certainly get into a spiral of debt. So what may well give is that she will stop coping; her mental wellbeing will suffer as her anxiety and stress massively increase. Her ability to care for her children is likely to suffer and she may no longer be able to do so effectively. Her family faces breakdown.

Data from the UK Government's "Troubled Families Programme" suggests that costs accrue as follows: eviction £8,619; truancy £1,418 per year; accommodating a homeless person (single I assume!) £18,515; taking a child into care £42,550. Torfaen Council working with PWC have estimated that a single child in the looked after system costs £125,000 per year.

So whilst the DWP will save about £4,500 per year from their budget, the human consequences for the children could be devastating, changing their lives for the worse for ever. If taken into care, they are unlikely to be fostered together - the family will be split and their education will be disrupted. They may witness their mother's health deteriorating. Even for those for whom the human cost is not so important there is the value for money argument. Does it make sense to risk having to spend £0.5 million per year from public funds to take four children into care just to save £4,500 per year? That is without calculating the longer term lifetime costs if we damage those children's lives along the way! ■



Her ability to care for her children is likely to suffer and she may no longer be able to do so effectively. Her family faces breakdown.



Education *Cerys Furlong*

Cerys Furlong is Director of NIACE Cymru, the national voice for lifelong learning.



Is education wasted on the young?

The summer budget confirmed the UK Government's commitment to three million apprenticeships in England. In what sounds like a welcome endorsement of vocational training, is this confirmation that the post-compulsory education offer in England is fast being reduced to a choice between an apprenticeship or a degree – the latter of which will need to be funded entirely through loans (with the end of maintenance grants also signaled in the Budget)?

But who cares? No one, if we believe Professor Alison Wolf (and I do!). Of course, education is devolved, but Wolf's recent report says that in England the 19+ education system is rarely discussed as an entity or an interlocking system. It's invisible in the media and in public discourse more generally, and I would argue that the same is broadly true in Wales.

Further Education (FE) and adult skills more broadly are far less often discussed than universities and Higher Education (HE). Resources for FE have declined rapidly, while for HE they have increased – the gap between the two is large and increasing. The recent debate on cuts in FE in the Senedd was a rare occasion that shone a light on the sector.

So why is this? In a country where there is broad political and public consensus around the need both to grow our economy and to have a social conscience there seems to be almost universal acceptance of the role of education in achieving social mobility. However, there is little serious analysis of the role of education and training in achieving social change, which seems bizarre considering education is the major lever the state has to wield in addressing social ills.



Everyone completing compulsory education should be equipped with literacy, numeracy and digital skills to cope in life

When it comes to post-compulsory education, decisions are all too often made within parameters of existing legislation – obviously this must be the case you might think. But why isn't there more serious consideration of how we could alter the legislative context to address new modern problems?

Given the rapidly changing patterns of working and the pace of technological change in life more broadly, it seems strange that more attention is not paid to how we equip ourselves as a nation for the future. Now our working lives are extended, we need periods of reflection, learning and retraining built in. The need for higher productivity is also key here. The UK Government's change of narrative is clear, and potentially helpful, on this. We need more and better skills, yes, but we also need to put them to more and better use.

While everyone, including our politicians, seems to agree that central to any discussion around productivity and growth must be the crucial role of education and skills, policies still focus on extending compulsory schooling,

with the part of the education system that directly interfaces with the labour market, namely post-19 education including FE, decreasing.

Decision-makers often use a basic economic argument for investing in early years (that they get a greater return due to the cumulative value of prior education). But it is also true that the educational experiences and qualification levels of adults (parents) may now be more important indicators of a child's attainment than income or social class. Professor Chris Taylor's study of the Millennium Cohort shows that the educational progress of children aged 3-7 may now be *more* associated with improvements in the educational achievement of their parents during those four years, than any other changes a child experiences in that time – including changes to household income. This challenges a fundamental truism that if you increase a person's wealth and get them into employment (whatever the job), we will lift them out of poverty. But is anyone listening?

The knowledge that a young person receives at school is only a beginning. Now it becomes outdated far more quickly than even 10-20 years ago. Everyone completing compulsory education should be equipped with literacy, numeracy and digital skills to cope in life – the Donaldson Review and the changes it brings are welcome. But young people – and this is fundamental – must also leave school with a clear understanding that learning is a good thing. They need to understand that their education is only beginning when they leave school, and that the desire and passion to continue their education through life is what will lead to their own (and our collective) success. ■

Members' NEWS

Promoting Independence Awards 2015

Does your organisation deliver fantastic services that make a real difference to the lives of vulnerable or marginalised people in Wales? Have you introduced innovative new ways of working that are achieving real results? Perhaps you work with a dedicated team who always go the extra mile? Why not shout about your good work and reward the efforts of your colleagues by entering the 2015 Promoting Independence Awards. Run by **Cymorth Cymru**, the awards

recognise excellence in the homelessness, support and social care sectors. Awards are presented in 10 categories and are free to enter. Find out more and submit your entry by visiting <http://www.promotingindependenceawards.org.uk/>
The closing date is 2nd October 2015.



Homelessness Symposium 14 October 2015, Angel Hotel, Cardiff

On 14 October, **Cymorth Cymru** will bring together speakers from across Wales and other parts of the UK, to look at the current state of homelessness in Wales.

With topics including health and homelessness, partnership working, and tackling poverty, all with a liberal sprinkling of data and examples of good practice, it promises to be an inspiring, informative and thought provoking day.

Find out more

<http://www.cymorthcymru.org.uk/en/events-and-training/events/homelessness-symposium>

The Power and Voice of Young People in Wales

Electoral Reform Society Cymru has recently published 'Welsh Power Report II: The Power and voice of Young People in Wales' which looks at turnout, registration, education on politics and citizenship, and the case for a Young People's Parliament in Wales.

It's available at: http://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/sites/default/files/files/publication/welsh_power_english_o.pdf

 Electoral
 Reform
 Society

NIACE & CESI to merge

NIACE – the National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education - and the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion (CESI) have announced that they are to merge. The new organisation, which will formally launch January 2016, aims to become the 'go to' think tank with national influence in learning, skills and employment. This will be supported by practical research, policy development, national events, campaigns and public affairs work.

For further information contact cerys.furlong@niace.org.uk



Welcome new members!

We are delighted to welcome new members:

- British Medical Association Cymru
- Cardiff and Vale University Health Board Chairman's Office
- Indycube
- Mark Isherwood
- Samaritans
- Trussell Trust
- WISERD

Please send news, publications or events for inclusion in the next issue to nisreen.mansour@bevanfoundation.org - inclusion is subject to space being available.

The 2015 Bevan Prize for Health and Wellbeing

We are delighted to announce the winners of the 2015 Bevan Prize for Health and Wellbeing, who are championing the core values of the NHS – equality of access to healthcare and health outcomes. Awarded on 7 July 2015, at the House of Commons, the judges – David Brindle, Public Services Editor at the Guardian, Baroness Ilora Finlay, President of the BMA, and Jaselle Williams, Bevan Foundation Trustee – chose the finalists and the three winners from almost a hundred nominations from across the UK.



Organisation Winner

Won by **Homerton University Hospital's TB Team** for their work to ensure that homeless patients were housed during their treatment. Their approach helps to prevent the spread of disease and also helps to combat the poor recovery rates experienced by homeless people with TB.

Sue Collinson from the TB Team said:

“Winning the Bevan Prize was a wonderful validation for us as a small, multi-disciplinary team working in a relatively overlooked area within the NHS, with our ethos of working with the patient as a whole person and not just as a carrier of a disease. Working in this way has produced some unexpected and wonderful outcomes, and the Bevan Prize has recharged our batteries!”



Individual Winner

Won by **Steve Cottrell** for the internet-based self-help programmes he has developed for people with stress, anxiety, phobias and panic attacks, including the Serenity Programme. The Betsi Cadwaladr UHB nurse said:

“It’s the recognition and appreciation of my work which keeps me going and helps give me the energy to ‘press on’ when times are tough. That’s why I can’t stress too much how much this award means to me. I have been questioning whether or not it’s worth investing my energy in further developing the programme; winning this award has helped me decide that it is, and charged my enthusiasm to continue.”

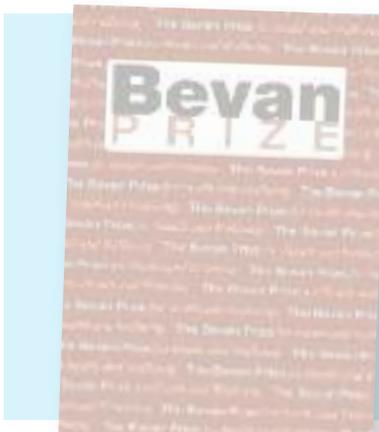


Lifetime achievement

Awarded to **Baroness Jane Campbell** for her tireless campaigning to achieve equal rights for disabled people through legislation and positive action. The judges highlighted her work at the British Council of Disabled People and the National Centre for Independent Living, as well as in the House of Lords.

On receipt of the award, Baroness Campbell called for an inclusive approach to healthcare and said she was accepting it on behalf of everyone who wants this kind of NHS.

The Bevan Prize was sponsored by Unison, Open University and the Aneurin Bevan Society. We would like to thank all those who attended on 7th July 2015 and who participated in this year’s prize.



Organisation finalists

- Cwm Taf UHB & Unite
- In It Together - Transgender Awareness Project Team (Public Health Wales)
- Media Academy Cardiff
- Wellbeing Through Work (Abertawe Bro Morgannwg UHB)

Individual finalists

- Elizabeth Blewett
- Dr Paul Edmondson-Jones
- Michelle Farley
- Veronica Snow

IN PRINT

The Summer 2015 budget: what it means for Wales

The first in-depth analysis of the impact of the Summer 2015 budget's changes to taxes and benefits, published in July, highlights the deep shifts taking place in the welfare state. In a balanced assessment of the winners and losers it finds:

- Wales' 630,000 pensioners benefit from the 'triple lock' on state pensions.
- Around 150,000 low-paid workers benefit from the new National Living Wage.
- A total of 1.4 million tax payers benefit slightly from the increase in personal tax allowances.
- Nearly 250,000 claimants of out-of-work benefits will lose from rates being frozen and other changes. The changes average £5 a week but for some families could be as high as £75 a week.
- About 120,000 low-income working households lose an average of £20 a week from changes to Tax Credits.

The report argues that action is needed to help more people in Wales to find work and to help families hardest hit by the changes.

Find out more at:

<http://www.bevanfoundation.org/publications/summer-2015-budget-what-it-means-for-wales/>

Women in Wales today

Four new briefings, prepared by the Bevan Foundation for the Women's Equality Network Wales, highlight the position of women today in respect of:

- unpaid care
- diversity
- poverty and economic violence
- devolution.

These unique analyses shine a light into women's lives and together paint a powerful picture of the continuing inequality and injustice that affects half the population of Wales.

All four reports are available at: www.bevanfoundation.org



Did you know?

- By the age of 59, women have a 50:50 chance of providing unpaid care.
- There are now more women aged 65 and over in Wales than there are girls aged 0-15.
- About one in seven of the poorest women experience domestic abuse – three times the proportion of women from high income households.
- There is no part of public life where women hold top positions in more than 4 out of 10 organisations.

COMING UP

Tax for Good

The Wales Act 2014 includes the ability for the National Assembly for Wales to introduce completely new taxes, as well as the taxes that are replacing Stamp Duty (the new Land Transaction Tax) and Landfill Tax (the new Landfill Disposals Tax). So far, few people have realised the potential this offers.

Our latest project looks at how devolved taxes could achieve positive social change. Ideas floated include a tourist tax, a tax on sugary food and drinks and even a tax on the methane produced by cows!

We'll be looking at all these ideas and a few more of our own in the next few months. We'll be gathering views over the summer and organising a seminar in the autumn – watch out for the invitations.

Find out more at:
<http://www.bevanfoundation.org/current-projects/tax-good/>

The Shape of Wales to come

Wales has experience rapid and unprecedented change in the last five years – with the prospect of further significant changes to come. What might Wales be like by 2020 – the date when child poverty was meant to have been eradicated, carbon emissions cut and smoking rates reduced to the lowest in the world?

This ground-breaking project brings together the many and varied forecasts about Wales in five years time – and asks 'Is this the Wales we might get?' And if it isn't the Wales we want, what should we do about it.

Due for publication in September, **make sure you don't miss it!**

MAKING A DIFFERENCE



Shaping the Assembly's Inquiry into Poverty

The Bevan Foundation's written and oral evidence has played a key role in shaping the first of the Assembly's Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee's inquiries into poverty. Submitted jointly with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, our evidence said that:

- the Welsh Government needed a clearer definition and understanding of poverty;
- the interplay between poverty and other forms of inequality needed to be recognised;
- that projects to reduce poverty should be scaled-up to make a difference;
- that there need to be clear links between strategies to reduce poverty and to grow the economy and employment.

Read the Assembly Committee's report at:

<http://www.senedd.assembly.wales/mglssueHistoryHome.aspx?Ild=8469>

Informing Assembly debate

Our analysis and ideas continue to inform debate amongst Assembly

Members from all parties, including:

- Jane Hutt, Minister for Finance, quoted our analysis of the new National Living Wage on 14th July 2015
- Mark Isherwood AM quoted our work on poverty in questions to the Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty on 17th June and 8th July 2015
- Edwina Hart, Minister for Economy Science and Transport, launched the latest bus service in the TrawsCymru network, the T5 serving Aberystwyth to Haverfordwest, following the recommendations of Bevan Foundation Director Victoria Winckler, on 3rd July 2015.

Informing the public

Our findings offer the public insights into the issues facing Wales today including:

- Comment on the Chancellor's summer budget in the Western Mail.
- Contributor to Morning Call on BBC Radio Wales on the living wage.
- Essay on Walesonline on devolved taxes.

Tony Graham, Trussell Trust



In 140 characters describe the Trussell Trust?

We are a national network of foodbank centres providing emergency food aid and support services to individuals and families who find themselves in crisis situations.

What is your role at the Trussell Trust?

I am the Wales Manager and carry responsible for a team of Development

Officers who work alongside our projects on the ground. I am the 'public face' of the Trust in Wales responsible for developing our external partnerships as well as handling all media enquiries and our increasing involvement in public affairs.

What do you enjoy most about working at the Trussell Trust?

Being able to offer constructive, community based solutions to the growing issue of food poverty and hunger in Wales is both challenging and deeply satisfying. To provide a community with the ability, knowledge and the tools to address a major issue such as hunger is such a fulfilling experience. We get alongside many different communities and take them from a good idea to the implementation of a workable plan. As a result of this partnership many individuals have told us they feel that they are doing something that leads to a more equal society and allows those who have to help those who do not. What we achieve and how we help communities makes it (relatively) easy to get out of bed on a wet Monday morning!

If the Trussell Trust was a biscuit what would it be?

Peter Kay has a brilliant sketch on one of his videos where he talks about the best biscuits for dunking in tea are hobnobs because they keep coming back for more. I guess we feel a bit like that – we get a lot of political heat sometimes but keep going back for more. Poverty (and hunger) are political issues and along with others we feel that so long as there is hunger or social injustice in our society we have to keep putting our heads above the parapet and getting shot at.

What are the biggest challenges facing the Trussell Trust?

Having the resources and staffing to keep doing what we are doing and more. With the result of the election, and some of the policies that may be implemented along with the recent Emergency Budget there is no doubt that we will be around for a while longer. As support and advice services continue to be rolled back we and organisations like ours have to find creative ways to 'step into the breach'. This is why we are developing 'More than Food' – an umbrella concept that will sit alongside our foodbank centres and provide financial, housing, welfare and legal advice along with cooking/budgeting skills to get behind some of the issues that people have and offer – more than food!

If you could invite anyone, dead or alive, to a dinner party who would you invite?

I'd love to have dinner with the apostle Paul and Winston Churchill – two of my historical heroes. Although each had faults and failings they were individuals who had deep beliefs and held fast to those convictions often in the face of huge adversity and controversy. Both were highly intelligent and extremely articulate and I would like to ask each of them how they thought through the issues of their time, how they determined the correct course of action and how they 'stayed the course'.

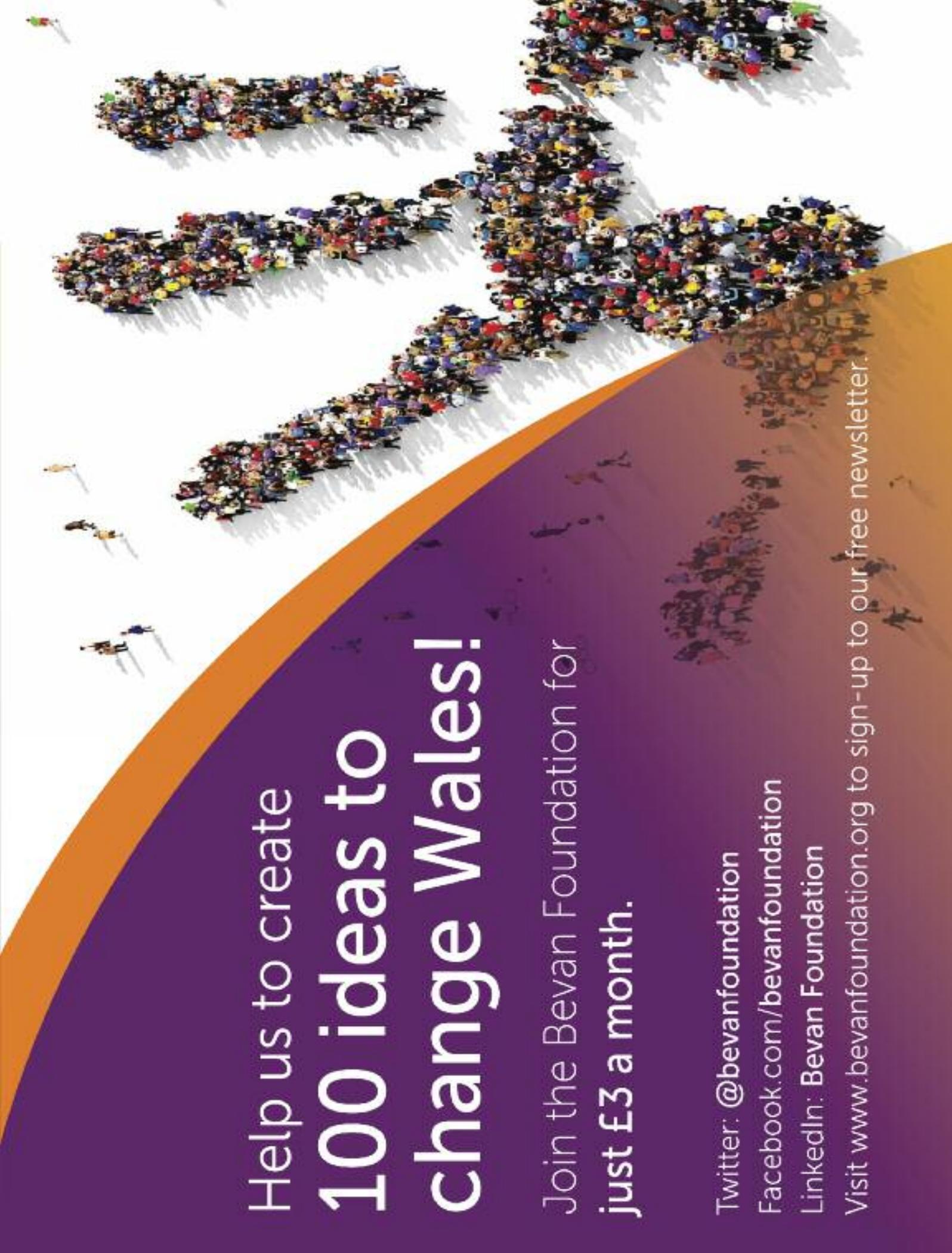
Why are you members of the Bevan Foundation?

Like many others I have come to respect and value the work and commentary that the Bevan Foundation contributes to life in Wales. I find many of the papers and articles that have been written to be provoking and useful and as an organisation we have come to realise that there is greater strength in working together and using the expertise of others rather than trying to do it alone. This was particularly evident at the last seminar on 'What will Wales look like in 2020' – a thought-provoking, challenging discussion of the next five years here in Wales.

Ten reasons to be a member of the Bevan Foundation!

1. unique insights into contemporary Wales
2. latest 'big ideas' from thought-leaders and experts
3. voices from the grass roots
4. easy access to key information
5. increased profile for your organisation
6. exchange best practice
7. widen your connections
9. broaden support for your organisation's aims
10. independent of government and political parties.

**All for just £3 a month (minimum) for individuals
£255 a year for organisations**



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**100 ideas to
change Wales!**

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