

# exchange

FOR BEVAN FOUNDATION MEMBERS

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FOUNDATION

WINTER 2015



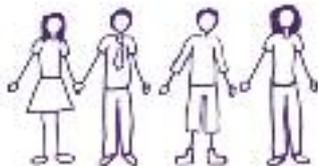
**New ideas on:**

- Funding local government
- NHS culture
- Inclusive environments
- Cultural participation
- Mental health

## Do you live in Wales?

Have you been to your local GP surgery to seek advice, treatment or support for mental health problems during the last 12 months?

Complete our short, anonymous survey and you could win a Kindle Fire!  
[www.surveymonkey.com/r/Snapshot15](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Snapshot15)



**Gofal**  
Thinking Differently



### 'It makes SENSE'

We would like to invite you to the official launch of the 'It makes Sense' campaign which is being held on **Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2016 at 12.00 pm to 2.00 pm** at the **Pierhead, Cardiff Bay**. The launch is being sponsored by **Vaughan Gething, AM**, the Deputy Minister for Health who will give a keynote address.

By attending this event you will be part of the launch of a new campaign which aims to raise awareness of the communication and information needs of people with sensory loss amongst the NHS Wales Workforce and also, to remind patients of their rights to accessible communication and information when they need healthcare.

The campaign launch will also serve as an opportunity to introduce a new sensory loss e-learning programme for NHS staff.

A full programme will be available shortly.

Please circulate this flyer widely inside your organisations. The launch event is free but places are limited so early booking is essential.



Working in partnership with...



WALES COUNCIL FOR DEAF PEOPLE  
CYNGOR CYMRU I DOEL FYDDAR



To book a place please contact: [Adam.Phillips@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:Adam.Phillips@wales.nhs.uk)



Older People's Commissioner for Wales  
Comisiynydd Pobl Hŷn Cymru

## Tackling Ageism Training

This free training course explores the unconscious prejudices that we may hold and the ways in which this affects the design and delivery of services for older people. Through a range of discussion and practical exercises, this training will:

- Define ageism and explore how stereotypes & prejudices underpin it
- Explore older age discrimination & its impacts.
- Introduce the social model of ageing
- Promote a rights based approach to recognising & challenging ageism
- Explain how you can use the Equality Act 2010, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the UN Principles for Older People in your work to improve services for older people and carers

Training sessions will be held at locations across Wales.

For further information, or to register your interest, call 029 2044 5033 or email [elizabeth.carr@olderpeoplewales.com](mailto:elizabeth.carr@olderpeoplewales.com)





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## Feature *Tony Travers*

Professor Tony Travers is Chair of the Independent Commission on Local Government Finance Wales.



# A new funding model for local government?

Opinion polling shows clearly that people believe local government has more impact on their everyday lives than the Westminster Parliament, Cabinet or civil service. Given the importance of street cleaning, refuse collection, highways and child care, it is small wonder that the public values councils. If local authorities fail, the impacts are apparent in the streets just outside all our front doors.

UK central government, by contrast, can lose billions on computer systems, under-performing defence equipment or failing charities and the impacts are invisible. Much of what Whitehall does cannot be judged from things we can see around us on a daily basis. The Welsh government's activities are easier to judge than those of UK ministers, but even the more manageable scale of the devolved administrations is still some distance from most people's daily consciousness.

Councils have a wide range of functions, including those listed above plus many others such as schools, social care for older people, election administration, emergency planning and housing. The entire fabric of society depends on the mundane business of sweeping streets, emptying bins and filling-in potholes. It is easy to take all this for granted. The challenge for the Welsh government and for local authorities themselves is how to ensure the best possible services at a time of declining public resources.

Local government in Wales faces significant financial pressure for several years to come. Because the Welsh government receives the bulk of its resources through the so-called Barnett Formula, it has little discretion to determine its own overall budget. Changes made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to public expenditure in England feed through directly to changes in Wales's funding.

The Barnett Formula was originally intended (back in the late 1970s) to be a temporary mechanism to link spending changes in England to those in Scotland and Wales. It is still with us, over 40 years later. Moreover, there is a widespread belief that the 'formula' is unfair to Wales. Scotland has a higher level of economic output (GDP) per head than Wales, yet receives more grant from the UK government. There is no suggestion the UK government will reform the Barnett Formula in the foreseeable future.

Because of the UK government's deficit reduction plan, the Welsh government and councils face a squeeze at least until 2019-20. Full details of the pressure on public spending in Wales will become known in days and weeks following the Chancellor's Autumn Statement. But it would be wise for Welsh local authorities to plan on the basis that their resources will fall in real terms for at least a further four or five years.



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Against this backdrop, the Welsh Local Government Association has appointed an independent commission to look at the future of local government finance in Wales. My co-commissioners and I are currently taking evidence across the country about the weaknesses and strengths of the existing arrangements. In recent months we have visited Swansea, Conwy, Llandrindod Wells, Carmarthen and Cardiff to hear from rural and urban authorities about their concerns. In addition, we have had constructive dialogue with ministers at Cardiff Bay. While it is too early to come to definitive conclusions, it is possible to outline some of the pressures and opportunities faced by councils across Wales.

Because of local authorities' significant dependence on grant from the Welsh government, there is much concern that the existing distribution is either unfair and/or too regulated. A number of rural councils feel they face the challenge of static populations, but with fixed costs for delivering services in remote areas. Rural authorities tend to have a larger proportion of older residents, with Conwy having the biggest share. Urban Wales, particularly around Cardiff, has a fast-rising population creating expenditure pressures which flow from growth.

Attempting to distribute grants equitably has always been an impossible task, in Wales, England and Scotland. At a time of flat or declining spending, perceived unfairness inevitably grows. Because the Welsh government has to cut up the national spending cake, it risks being criticised by everyone. Public pressure in relation to the health service has made it hard for governments in Cardiff or London to avoid tilting public resources towards the NHS.

All of this begs the question of whether it might be better if councils in Wales were able to raise more of their resources locally. Although there will always be a role for the Welsh government to equalise between richer and poorer authorities, it might be possible to reform local authority funding so that councillors had more control over their own budgets. Such a reform would also provide greater incentives for councils to pursue policies which drove up economic output: more growth would lead to higher tax receipts.

Such questions are being considered in England as well. The UK government has announced that by 2019-20, English councils will be wholly funded from council tax and business rates. Crucially, this reform will allow authorities to keep any growth in their tax-base. Right along the Wales/England hinterland, from Merseyside, Greater Manchester and Cheshire in the north to Bristol in the south, council leaders in England will have an increased incentive to liberalise planning and become more

attractive for business and residents.

Reform in England is not, of itself, a reason to do the same in Wales. One of the benefits of devolution has been the opportunity for Wales and Scotland to make their own decisions about issues such as the use of public resources and the governmental culture of each nation. But there is no doubt that councils in Wales believe something needs to be done to modernise and improve the system of local government finance.

UK taxation powers are being devolved to both Scotland and Wales. Landfill tax, stamp duty and responsibility for non-domestic rates will in future be handled by the Welsh government. It is possible income tax will follow, as in Scotland. Of course, the 'Barnett Formula' grant will be reduced to reflect any extra tax-raising powers in Cardiff. There will still be a need for Treasury support for Wales but it is likely to diminish over time, making the Welsh government ever-more concerned to ensure the economy grows at or above the UK trend.

In this desire to incentivise higher economic output, local councils and the Welsh government have common cause. Local authorities are unlikely to change their behaviour if they find themselves hamstrung by over-regulation of grants and in their use of resources. This is not to say that ministers in Cardiff should not express a public view about performance, but it strongly suggests that local government needs greater autonomy to determine investments and make their own decisions about most provision.

People believe local councils are important to the look and feel of an area. If councillors are to make better decisions (and face the electoral consequences of bad ones) they must have greater freedom to use resources as residents and businesses see fit. A new balance of power is probably required where local government knows where it is free to deliver change, but where ministers are comfortable that incentives deliver improvement. Compared with other, apparently-intractable, challenges in the modern world such a reform could actually be achieved. The opportunity to improve Wales's government now exists.

## Public Services *Darren Williams*

Darren Williams is Wales Campaigns Officer at the Public and Commercial Services Union.



# Putting public services on the agenda in 2016

**T**he National Assembly elections in May 2016 are set to take place at a crucial juncture for Welsh society and especially the public sphere. Our services are being put under ever-greater strain by budget cuts while, at the same time, the future of our governmental institutions is highly uncertain, with new tax-raising and borrowing powers due to come on-stream during the next Assembly term, legislation on law-making powers currently going through Parliament and debate still raging about the longer-term future of devolution and about the way that Welsh public services are funded.

Any organisation that plays an active role in Welsh public life is likely to have things to say about these issues during the election campaign and PCS is no exception. We represent workers in central government and other public bodies, in both the devolved and the non-devolved sectors in Wales, including such employers as the Welsh Government, the Department for Work and Pensions, the DVLA and National Museum Wales. Our members are affected, both as employees and as citizens, by the issues confronting Wales at the present – and especially by the impact of austerity.

The Welsh Government's budget has been cut by £1.3 billion in real terms since 2010/11 and further cuts will

follow from Westminster's Spending Review. The cuts pursued by UK governments since 2010 are, in the view of PCS and other unions, a political choice and not an economic necessity. And this choice has slowed down economic recovery and increased inequality. In addition, we are among the many organisations and commentators critical of the way that the Barnett Formula causes changes in spending by UK government departments in England to be applied to Wales on a pro rata, population basis, taking no account of social need. The independent Holtham Commission estimated that Wales would get an additional £400 million a year if funding were allocated to Wales on the same basis as the UK government allocates funding to English regions. PCS supports the calls for Barnett to be replaced by a needs-based mechanism – an issue that will no doubt be aired during the elections.

The UK government's welfare "reforms" have hit Wales particularly hard because there is a greater degree of dependence on welfare benefits here than in Great Britain as a whole: a higher proportion of the working-age population in Wales claims welfare benefits, especially disability and sickness benefits. The Auditor General for Wales reported in January that introduction of the bedroom tax and the benefit cap have led to a

reduction in housing benefit for 20.4% social housing tenants in Wales, compared to 15.3% in England. Levels of rent debt had increased by nearly a quarter in the first six months after the changes, affecting more than half of all tenants in Wales.

Public sector workers in Wales, including PCS members, have also been heavily affected by austerity. As of June 2015, Wales had lost 59,000 public sector jobs in the five years since the then coalition government began its austerity programme (a 17% drop). 4,730 jobs had gone in the civil service alone, in the five years to March 2015. The DWP alone lost 2,430 jobs over this period (equivalent to almost a third of the total it employed in 2010) and HM Revenue and Customs 910. Looking at the Welsh economy overall, we can see that the unemployment rate, although it has been falling, remains significantly higher than across the UK as a whole: 6.2% of the economically active population, as opposed to 5.4%.

PCS is like other trade unions in bringing our campaigning into electoral politics but we differ from sister-unions in the way in which we do this. We are not affiliated to any political party but work with elected representatives from all parties who are willing to take up our concerns and do what they can to protect our members' interests. We have a Parliamentary Group at Westminster with representatives of all parties, long chaired by John McDonnell MP, now the Shadow chancellor. Similarly, in the Assembly, we have a cross-party group that was initially chaired by Leanne Wood until she became leader of Plaid Cymru and is now headed by Labour's Julie Morgan. In both cases, the politicians who belong to the Group raise our concerns in the chamber, ask questions of ministers, put down early day motions or statements of opinion, write letters to ministers or senior managers and publicly champion our campaigns.

Since 2007, we have intervened in elections at all levels under the banner, 'Make Your Vote Count'. We circulate a set of pledges to candidates of all parties (with the exception of the racist far right, whose ideas conflict with our union constitution), asking them to declare their position on the major issues affecting our members and the services they work to deliver. We encourage members to put these questions directly to their local candidates and feed back any answers they receive, which are posted on our website. Thus, while we never tell our members which party or candidate they should vote for (although we do warn them off the far right), we give them the information they will need if they are going to make decision based on the candidates' views on public services.

The pledges for 2016 are currently being finalised but



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are likely to cover the following issues:

- freeing Welsh public sector workers from the unfair and economically damaging pay cap; securing appropriate anti-social hours payments for all those obliged to work weekends and public holidays
- campaigning for publicly accountable public services, funded by fair and progressive taxation and delivered by valued public sector staff; for the introduction of a needs-based funding mechanism for the Welsh devolved sector; for legislative changes to close the tax gap; and for action by the Welsh Government to mitigate attacks on social security
- opposing privatisation and outsourcing of public services; and seeking to ensure that, where privatisation has taken place, workers retain parity of pay and conditions with public employees – including the Living Wage – and have the right to representation by a recognised trade union
- challenging all forms of discrimination and working to ensure that all Assembly legislation and Welsh Government policies are equality-proofed
- encouraging the Welsh Government to continue to engage in positive relations with recognised trade unions, and to maintain existing check-off and facility time for reps; and opposing the UK Trade Union Bill, which seeks to undermine collective bargaining and fair arrangements at the workplace.

PCS will do what we can to get these issues on to the political agenda as we approach polling day next May. Politicians tend to be at their most receptive at election-times and the concentration of our members in a number of key Welsh constituencies is such that they could make a crucial difference to the outcome. We look forward to engaging in debate as political temperature in Wales heats up.

## Community *Chris Johnes*

Chris Johnes has worked on a range of community development programmes across the UK, mostly here in Wales for the last 15 years. He is the recently appointed Chief Executive of the Building Communities Trust



# Beyond the pound in our pockets



**Austerity has strongly reduced the ability of government, most obviously local government, to provide or fund the types of activity or service that add to wellbeing.**

Our understanding of the challenges facing people's standards of living has sharpened considerably in recent years, driven by the debate around in-work poverty. However the excellent work of the Resolution Foundation at a UK level and the Bevan Foundation and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation here in Wales should not lead us to think that our standard of living is driven entirely by the amount of money in our pockets.

How we live, and how contented or otherwise we feel, depends on a wider range of factors, some of whose absence can be mitigated by money, especially by a lot of money, and some of which cannot.

These include security in housing, feeling healthy, the quality of relationships (both in the home and more broadly), levels of skills and education, job satisfaction, feelings of physical and financial security, the quality of the local environment and feeling part of a community. Where these conditions are met people's real standards

of living, the degree to which they can enjoy - not just endure - life rises.

And of course while some of those factors are intrinsic (most obviously the absence of certain health conditions) many are the product of our environment and our social relations now or earlier in life.

Any examination of the social history of Wales and other industrialised areas will demonstrate the collective provision of the opportunities which provided for a higher standard of living than would otherwise have been possible. Libraries, welfare halls, choirs and sports clubs to name a few all



contributed to a better quality of life even beyond the obvious economic collectivism provided through trades unions.

Eventually, especially after the Second World War, the collective provision of many, but not all, of these facilities and services moved from being run by communities to being run by the state in different forms. This brought the advantages of certainty of provision and universal coverage and the disadvantages of more bureaucratic and sometimes unresponsive approaches to providing what had become a service rather than a joint venture.

And while transport and information technology have drastically reduced the importance of very local communities in providing that sort of support, for many people what happens in their local community and how they relate to it remains a key determinant of their quality and standard of living. The degree to which people can access leisure and social activities locally, the availability of play for children, friends and family who can provide childcare, the presence of local shops and knowing that you feel safe walking your local streets and having green space in easy reach all affect how much people enjoy life and how they can cope with the pressures they face.

As the historical examples show, collective action has long been an essential tool for communities where most people don't have large disposable incomes. Working together allows people to pool smaller amounts of money, their time and their voices to get things done they could not do on their own. And of course more affluent communities do this too, it is just sometimes less obvious as individuals and families are more often able to afford commercially provided services and use networks that are less geographically concentrated rather than depending upon and supporting people in neighbouring streets.

But for communities whose wellbeing is strongly supported by services funded, one way or the other by the public purse the outlook is more and more challenging. Austerity has strongly reduced the ability of government, most obviously local government, to provide or fund the types of activity or service that add to wellbeing. This is of course a much more marked threat to communities where people have less money: as the Bevan Foundation's Shape of Wales to Come report highlights, growing poverty and inequality is highly likely in the next few years and when matched with major public spending cuts will lead to poorer communities being neither able to afford certain services via the market or access them via the state.

On an individual and household level, cuts to tax credits are almost certain to make things worse making collective support and the retention of local services more important rather than less. The ability to access informal

child care and support for older carers, local leisure and learning facilities as well as access to cheap credit and even emergency support such as food banks will become increasingly pressing, at exactly the time when the state is less able to provide.

It is not at all clear that the scale of the challenge to living standards has been fully understood by policy makers. There are some examples of new thinking on the provision of public goods such as the *RCT Together* initiative which is looking at community based provision of services which were previously in the public sector. Similar thinking underpins the more imaginative delivery of services commissioned under the auspices of the new the Welsh Social Care and Wellbeing Act but shifting from thinking into action is still all too rare. It remains to be seen how much community wellbeing actually permeates the soon to be compulsory local authority level Wellbeing Plans required by the Future Generations Act; this may well depend on both the indicators chosen and how much wider understanding of wellbeing (which has been widely researched) permeates public practice and third sector advocacy across Wales.

Into this challenging environment Building Communities Trust is now launching the Big Lottery funded Invest Local Programme. The programme aims to support people in local communities to prioritise the things that will help people improve their standards of living and wellbeing. The programme's intentions are to equip the communities it works with to develop the capacity to take action both independently and with others to promote their wellbeing and standard of living, and to increase resilience. Area-based community programmes are of course nothing new in Wales; what will be new about this programme are the arrangements for funding and support. Each community will have a guaranteed £1m to spend on issues of community members' choice, over a period of up to 10 years. This gives each community the time and freedom to prioritise the issues that local residents feel will make a real difference to them. Critically there will be no themes, no targets and no centrally decided priorities for the programme; community priorities will drive it.

We do not know what choices people will make, or if people in different communities will make very different types of choices in addressing potentially similar challenges, but we do know that these will be the choices of people living and working in those localities. The Invest Local programme will bring a different type of focus to trying to raise people's wellbeing: it may potentially be limited by being so local in focus but will definitely be hugely enhanced by being designed and run by those who are benefiting from the activities or services they themselves have prioritised.

## Health *Ewan Hilton*

Ewan Hilton is the Chief Executive of mental health and wellbeing charity Gofal.



# In pursuit of a mentally healthy Wales



In 2009 the Mental Health Promotion Network published a report which made the economic case for investment in promoting mental health and preventing mental illness in Wales. The research estimated the overall cost of mental health problems in Wales to be £7.2 billion per year. This figure included the cost of health and social care services, loss to the economy due to the impact of mental health problems on people's ability to work and the broader human costs of poor mental health on people's quality of life.

In Wales we enjoy strong cross party support for mental health and a shared commitment to improve mental health services. Since the aforementioned report we have seen the creation of progressive mental health legislation in the Mental Health (Wales) Measure which enshrines duties to improve primary and secondary care as well as the right to advocacy. We have an ambitious whole population, all age and cross cabinet mental health and wellbeing strategy with outcomes that focus on demonstrable improvements in mental health and wellbeing. We have a national anti-stigma and discrimination campaign that is changing attitudes across the length and breadth of Wales and the beginnings of a strong service user and carer involvement mechanism to influence future policy, legislation and practice.

In my experience we also have a wealth of people across the public, third and private sectors, including users and carers, who are committed to driving change

and improvement. All of this, along with a commitment to retain the mental health funding ring fence, and recent additional investment in mental health services should mean that we are in a pretty rosy place... right?

Well, undeniably many people are getting a good, or even a great service. But why does the demand on mental health services continue to increase? Why do many people still feel that they are unable to access the services they need? Why do some of those who do feel that the service is ineffective and fails to improve their mental health? And would we accept the current service standards if they related to physical health?

In the last three weeks I have been shocked by some of the conversations I have had with people experiencing mental health problems and seeking support. A young woman with a serious mental illness, who has had long stays in hospital, understands her illness well, knows when she is becoming unwell and needs quick access to treatment to prevent deterioration. Her GP will not refer her for talking therapy due to lengthy waiting times and she is left struggling to cope at home on her own. A family member, who works for the NHS and is off work with severe anxiety and panic attacks is getting great support from a GP but is unable to access work based counselling services for 10-12 weeks. A friend who has been off work for over three months with severe anxiety and depression, being bounced between her GP, primary mental health team and secondary care; being prescribed

medication which has done nothing more than increase symptoms and offered no further support. And a young mother in extreme mental distress, experiencing suicidal thoughts and struggling to look after her child, but is unable to access support despite being known to mental health services.

All of this is happening despite progressive legislation; despite the all age, whole population, cross cabinet strategy; and despite significant resources being pumped into mental health. We hear politicians talking about parity but we are a long way away from what we would want for ourselves or the people we care about

However, I am not one for focusing on the negatives. I would rather acknowledge they are real, try to understand them and put my energy into working with others to make improvements.

With the National Assembly elections on the horizon we have launched our manifesto which has been developed in partnership with the Mental Health Foundation and supported by Bipolar UK, Diverse Cymru and Samaritans Cymru. The views and experiences of people with mental health problems are at the heart of the manifesto, which outlines six key areas that we believe are crucial to improving mental health and wellbeing in Wales.

The first area focuses on future generations because we believe that a mentally healthy Wales requires a focus on promoting good mental health and wellbeing from an early age. This includes support for women and their families during and after pregnancy, building confidence and resilience among children, encouraging young people to talk openly and positively about mental health and providing high quality support in schools, colleges and universities.

Unsurprisingly, access to psychological therapies remains a key issue for many people with mental health problems. Timely access to psychological therapies can improve recovery and reduce the need for more acute services. However, too many people are still waiting too long to access this type of support. The Wales Psychological Therapies Plan for Adult Mental Health is currently being developed and we believe its implementation must be a priority for the next Welsh Government.

Recent announcements by the Welsh Government to reduce waiting time targets have been broadly welcomed. However, I would issue a note of caution as I am still not convinced that we are measuring the right things. I have a particular concern that the data collection linked to this announcement will continue to mask unacceptable waits for essential talking therapies. Absolute transparency and accountability is crucial and specific waiting time data for psychological therapies



must be collected and published so we can fully understand and address this critical issue.

We are calling for the retention of the mental health funding ring fence; a year on year increase in mental health funding and most importantly a funding regime that links money to patient outcomes. Of course I welcome the increased funding going into mental health services. However, until we are able to evidence the impact of this money against robust outcome data that is significantly more sophisticated than measuring waiting times, how will we be able to assess impact and improvements in the mental health and wellbeing of the people of Wales?

We know that all areas of life can affect our mental health and wellbeing and so we welcome the cross Cabinet commitment in *Together for Mental Health*. However, it is essential that the next Government continues with this commitment. Mental health is everyone's business and we need every Minister and department to play their part.

We know that people with mental health problems continue to face inequalities when it comes to physical health and access to quality accommodation, education and employment opportunities. People with a serious mental illness have three times the risk of dying of heart disease and a life expectancy of up to 20 years shorter; are less likely to be homeowners and more likely to live in unstable environments. Mental health conditions are the primary reason for claiming health-related benefits yet an estimated 86-90% of unemployed people with mental health conditions want to work.

We must do more to address these issues and ensure that people with mental health problems can live healthy and fulfilled lives.

I hope that our manifesto is the start of many more conversations with political parties in the lead up to the Assembly elections in 2016. The issues raised within this document are all key factors in developing a mentally healthy Wales where people can live fulfilled lives and achieve their aspirations.



**We are calling for the retention of the mental health funding ring fence; a year on year increase in mental health funding and most importantly a funding regime that links money to patient outcomes.**



## Three ways to tackle gender inequality

**A**t a recent summit on the future of Public Services in Wales I gave a speech about women in leadership. I firmly believe that if we are serious about making a step change in how we deliver public services in Wales, we also need to think about what the future leadership of those public services looks like. In short, we need a more representative leadership that better reflects the diversity of Wales.

I believe our current system falls short, we are losing talented women to our most senior leadership roles, because of the disparity between perception and reality- the way women perceive themselves, the way men perceive themselves and the way that men perceive women. This is unacceptable. So how do we address these problems? There are many things we need to change. Here I highlight just three:

### 1. AN INCLUSIVE SET OF ROLE MODELS ACROSS PUBLIC LIFE IN WALES

I want female role models who are imperfect but human-judged on the same scrutiny level as a man. To achieve such as change, we need a commitment to appointing, promoting and supporting women, and other under-represented groups to positions of power and influence right across Wales. There are many levers within our control.

All of us have a duty to think differently about the women we work with, and could work with. When it comes to girls and ambition, the pattern is clear: girls are discouraged from leading. When a little boy asserts himself, he is called a leader. When a little girl does the same, she is called bossy - a precursor to words like aggressive, angry

and too ambitious that plague strong female leaders. Calling girls bossy is one of the many things we do to discourage them from leading.

Of course, we also have to make strides in our political representation, and public appointments. It is quite frankly an embarrassment that we are as under-representative as we are and with so few signs of improvement in many places. The pace of change is far too slow. It requires positive action, and quickly.

There are things we must do to reform the way we make appointments to our senior roles, including in public appointments, but equally across all our public services. Firstly, we need to be transparent. When it comes to recruiting our future leaders, we must ensure that roles are widely circulated and advertised for an appropriate length of time to enable as large a pool of talent to apply as possible.

Secondly we must be prepared to admit that we do not know everything- and that includes the type of





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people we think we need. We need to think more carefully about how and what we test when we recruit people. Do we focus enough on whether our recruits have the right skills and attributes for the job, on their tangible past experiences, or too much on what they say and how they present for an hour. Leadership is not a cumulative set of skills, and certainly the highest paid person in the room does not always possess the best leadership skills.

As a minimum for public appointments we should have at least a two-round interview process and provide candidates with advice on how the interview process will be conducted, to ensure those who have not previously had a public

appointment are not at a disadvantage.

We must also work harder to address our unconscious bias which can override rational decisions and logical thinking. Now jumping to conclusions is completely normal- everyone does it in everyday situations. But at work, in recruitment settings, with new teams, or even with colleagues we think we know, unconscious bias is a barrier to spotting talent and enabling people to reach their full potential. We need to re-train our brains.

## **2. AN END OF DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF GENDER**

Early November marked Equal Pay Day- the point of the year where women effectively stop getting paid for their work, relative to men. The gap between men and women's earnings in the UK is 19%, compared to an EU average of 16.4%. Women are also less likely to be employed than men (68.6% compared to 78.4%). Advancements in flexible working have supported women to access the labour market, with a record number of women now in work, but these flexible conditions often come with a hidden pay penalty. The hourly pay difference between full time and part time workers is 25% and when you consider that 44% of women work part time, compared to just 13% of men it's easy to see how this contributes to the pay gap.

Women are also much less likely than men to ask for a pay rise, with some estimating that two thirds of

women have never asked for a pay rise. Women are also likely to underestimate their starting salary by around £4,000 compared to men. Why do we even ask what people were previously paid anyway? These 'standard practices' only serve to keep women paid less.

Depressingly, research suggests that success and likeability are positively correlated for men, but negatively correlated for women. Men are expected to be assertive, confident and opinionated, so we welcome their leadership. In contrast, women are expected to be kind, nurturing, and compassionate, so when they lead, they are going all out against expectations. A man who takes a tough decision at work is often seen as decisive, while a woman who does the same may be seen as impulsive or brash.

We cannot continue to only allow men and women to get ahead if they display stereotypically male behaviours. The men and women who do not get ahead often do not display these behaviours, and therefore are not seen as leaders.

## **3. WE NEED TO CREATE A CULTURE THAT DOES NOT FEAR CRITICISM AND WELCOMES CRITIQUE**

Performance cannot be improved and real change cannot occur without taking risks - we need bold, authentic and risk-taking leadership. To shift the balance of power, we need to give up some power.

All of us in leadership positions, in whatever sector, have a responsibility - both upwards to our superiors, our stakeholders, customers and also downwards to our line reports and suppliers - to show that the current status quo is inadequate. As leaders and managers we need to ensure women succeed in our organisations. We need to evaluate performance fairly, making recruitment and review as gender blind as possible to create a level playing field. We need to give women more credit. It is not just women who are tough on themselves, we all discount women's achievements.

We MUST pay women fairly- ensure you conduct equal pay audits, publish them and address any inequality. Encourage women in your organisations to pursue more senior positions. We tend to underestimate our skills and therefore take fewer risks than men. Support your colleagues who are parents through pregnancy, parental leave and with child care. Too many employers lose women during their child bearing years, just at the time men's careers' are accelerating past them. And finally, think about how you individually inspire leadership in your staff, family members and children.

## Culture *David Anderson*

David Anderson is Director General of Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales.



# The role of cultural participation in achieving social justice

**Culture is everywhere, and it is created by everyone.**

It is not the role of institutions, such as museums, performing arts companies or libraries, to decide what culture is and is not. Rather, it is our job to enable as many people as possible to achieve what they themselves want in their lives, through cultural participation. As summarised in the new Vision for Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales, adopted by its trustees just a few months ago, it is “inspiring people, changing lives”.

This is not a new idea. It was the reason literary and philosophical societies were founded, and why in the



**We can respect the achievements of previous generations, but we should not be nostalgic for their world**

nineteenth century local authorities created public museums in towns and cities across the UK. It is why women as well as men flocked to adult education classes at the new Schools of Art and Schools of Science from the 1850s onwards. It is why industrial communities in Wales built their own institutes, filled their libraries with books, and staged plays and musical performances.

Jonathan Rose, in his book *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (2001), has

documented as never before the cultural lives of working people in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, principally through their own letters and diaries. His research suggests that one quarter or more at that time were active, life-long self-educators. In Gwyn Thomas's *The Dark Philosophers* (1946), there is nothing strange in its portrayal of working men frequenting an Italian cafe in the Valleys to listen avidly to opera.

Most people today can identify one or more self-educators in their parents' or grandparents' generations. My own grandfather, a Belfast shipyard worker who was born in 1895 and left school aged 12, was one such "philosopher". He loved music and was an avid reader of poetry, novels and technical books. As a young man he used Bell's *Elocution*, a Victorian classic, to teach himself how to speak in public. He learned about nutrition during the Second World War; the only time I ever tasted mayonnaise as a child in the 1960s was when he made it. He visited museums, bought books on art, and in retirement (never having practiced before) he set himself the task of painting a picture for each of his thirteen grandchildren. The last time I saw him, he said, "the day you stop learning is the day you die." His son, my father, also left school without qualifications, but he too believed throughout his life that all the learning in the world was his.

Arnold Bennett was the champion of such working class self-educators. Unlike many writers in the early twentieth century such as Virginia Woolf (who mocked working class readers, as well as working class writers such as James Joyce, with a vicious tongue) Bennett consciously and deliberately wrote for them. I still have my grandfather's copy of *How To Live On 24 Hours A Day*, one of Bennett's small self-help monographs.

We can respect the achievements of previous generations, but we should not be nostalgic for their world, which was often marked by extreme poverty and

insecurity. And we should remember that, like us today, many miners preferred to read popular fiction rather than *Das Kapital*.

After the Second World War, the opening of routes through formal education for working class children shifted responsibility from the individual and the community to the state, and changed public attitudes to learning. From the 1960s the Open University offered many adults (like my own mother) an unexpected second chance to get an affordable degree. Today, a significant proportion of young people go on to higher education. Self-education is no longer needed, it seems.

And yet. And yet. Is there no poverty, no unemployment? Wales has communities with some of the highest levels of poverty in Europe. Research by the Sutton Trust has shown, with clinical accuracy, that children born into poverty in the UK, to parents with limited education, are highly unlikely to go into higher education. Mental as well as physical health issues scar the lives of many children and adults. It has become clear that we cannot rely on an increasingly divided formal education system alone to enable us to address our growing social, economic and health challenges.

It may be no coincidence that inequality is growing when our society is facing an unprecedented onslaught from neo-liberalism. This nihilistic, dystopian ideology has no care for people, as individuals or communities. It has no respect for the past or the future, and no loyalty to place. It is everywhere and yet nowhere, appearing and disappearing in localities as it chooses, leaving others to pay the cost. All things on this earth are assets to be monetarised, exploited and if convenient abandoned.

Neo-liberalism is a machine for making poverty. It thrives on injustice and inequality, the yeast in its bread. It has no corporeal existence, except through us as consumers. When we are induced to embody its values, we then perform its grotesque dance of death.

Confronted with these relentless pressures, communities need anchor institutions that are founded on positive values of learning, and of people, place and culture more than ever. The appetite for self-education (or independent and informal learning) has not disappeared; like a river, it just flows through whatever channels are available. Of course, these include the media and the internet. But, more than at any period in living memory, at a time of growing inequality and shrinking opportunity, adults and children also need centres for social self-education that have a physical presence in their own communities.

In Wales today, with its strong communitarian traditions, and facing such pressing challenges, there is still surely a role for self-education in public policy and



## Museums provide an alternative universe of learning.

planning. The miners' institutes may have disappeared, but local museums and libraries - which are the last surviving fruits of the nineteenth century commitment to self-education - still remain in their communities. The loss of other centres for adult education and community participation makes it still more important that museums should continue to fulfil this role.

Museums provide an alternative universe of learning. It is one that is very different from the classroom, based on learning through the senses, through touch and sight and sound, and even smell. Museums bring us into personal contact with the past, reaching out to us across barriers of language, culture and time. They are safe, social and communal spaces. Again and again, over the years, I have seen the extraordinary impact that museum experiences can have on children as well as adults, engaging people who have not responded positively to formal education.

In recent years museums and other arts and cultural organisations in Wales have become leaders, not just within the United Kingdom but globally, in developing the role of museums as centres for learning and social action. Two reports - "An Independent Report for the Welsh Government into Arts in Education in Schools in Wales" by Professor Dai Smith (2013), and "Culture and Poverty: Harnessing the power of the arts, culture and heritage to promote social justice in Wales" by Baroness Kay Andrews (2014) - build upon this best practice, and together provide an inspiring framework for national development of learning beyond the classroom in Wales.

A couple of current projects illustrate the significant contribution of museums to this field. One is the Welsh Government-sponsored Fusion programme, developed

to implement the recommendations of Baroness Andrews' report. As part of the 12 month pilot phase for the programme, which was launched in May 2015, six Pioneer Areas have been established across Wales. Within these, national, regional and local cultural and heritage bodies are working in collaboration with Communities First clusters and local community groups to explore opportunities for increasing participation in cultural activities among individuals and communities who would not normally engage with these activities. The research and evaluation that supports the programme is being led by Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales, in partnership with the Welsh Government. This is the most ambitious Government cultural initiative of this kind that has ever been seen, not just in Wales but in the whole of the UK. We should celebrate this ambition.

A second example of contemporary self-education through culture is the Our Museum programme, funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. As part of this initiative, staff at St Fagans National Museum of History are working with third sector organisations such as The Wallich and Drugaid Wales, using volunteering and co-production methodologies to develop new learning opportunities for their clients. For staff, these methodologies have required a substantial investment of time and emotion, and a letting go of authority - but their reward has been to see the museum become more relevant and engaging. For participants from communities and partner organisations, the experience has often been inspiring, and sometimes life-changing.

These are just two of many instances of museums renewing themselves as centres for self education, to meet twenty-first century needs. It is ironic, then, that despite such innovations, civic museums now face their greatest threat since they were founded. Lacking the statutory protection afforded to schools, hospitals and social care, they are now more vulnerable to funding cuts than almost any other local service.

If they close, our museums, the most important holders of the memories and identities in their communities, with learning resources that often have been built up over a century or more, will be all but impossible to restore.

Wales has a proud tradition of self-education. To urge that it should continue to invest in its museums and libraries as essential community resources for self-education in the 21st century is not utopianism, but pragmatic recognition of the continued need in society for this complementary learning system.

How better can we pay respect to the efforts of our past generations, and their commitment to equality in learning, than by sustaining the cultural institutions they created to achieve this?



## Environment *Ceri Jackson*

Ceri Jackson, Chair of the Wales Vision Strategy Advisory Group, Director RNIB Cymru and Chair of Age Alliance Wales argues that accessible environments should be a priority for everyone



# Inclusive environments: compliance just does not cut it

**D**evelopments in the built environment funded by the tax payer have highlighted the need for us to be more inclusive in the design process: to scrutinise, to challenge and to be far more ambitious when it comes to accessible building environments.

The Senedd is a good example of this, an iconic building in Wales that we are all proud of - but which failed to meet accessibility requirements.

It is harder than it should be when it comes to pushing the boundaries and reaching beyond existing regulations. Many stakeholders such as architects and designers simply don't engage in the wider needs of our population. They are simply working towards compliance.

This is short sighted. Good accessible design is good for everyone and when considered at the design stage should not scupper innovation or ambition and should not cost more.

The refurbishment of Jones Court in Cardiff, our joint RNIB Cymru and Cardiff Institute for the Blind offices, started with extensive consultation with our members and stakeholders. This was used to inform the different stages of the development. The feedback from visitors has been phenomenal in terms of accessibility and the overall visitor experience.

RNIB Cymru's "Visibly Better" Accreditation Scheme for Housing Associations has been instrumental in driving up accessibility standards with people reporting an increased ability to live independently and enhanced wellbeing. Good design also plays a pivotal role in preventing falls and accidents. The scheme is a hallmark of good practise. Changes organisations need to make to meet the standards are often simple and inexpensive, and yet can make a huge difference to the lives of tenants.

The NHS is starting to engage in accessible healthcare environments with many health boards asking for advice. The NHS Centre for Equality and Human Rights recently hosted a conference on this. There is much enthusiasm and pockets of good practice but there seems to be some way to go before we will start to see significant progress in primary and secondary care. With the high prevalence of older people in healthcare settings, and the number of slips, trips and falls, we should at the very least be prioritising accessibility even if only for existing



refurbishment and capital programmes.

If we are not there culturally, and the policy and legislative framework doesn't cut it, we should at the very least be considering the needs of our ageing nation when it comes to public buildings and developments. Bus stations are a pertinent example of this, with one local authority in Wales having to invest post development to address access issues, and others struggling to achieve inclusive design.

Wider accessibility is also relevant and we should be proud that every local authority in Wales has signed up to the Dublin Declaration, demonstrating a commitment to creating communities that are inclusive and supportive. The Dublin Declaration shows a city or community's pledge to become "Age-Friendly". Each city or community will have to consult with people of all ages before becoming part of the WHO Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities.

The advances in technology have also opened up a whole new world in relation to navigation and accessibility. When combined with accessible physical environments, technology provides a unique opportunity which we should all be embracing.

Compliance does not go anywhere near far enough. It's time we stopped just conforming to the bare minimum and thought more ambitiously about our built environment - because ultimately, we will all feel the benefit.



**With the high prevalence of older people in healthcare settings, and the number of slips, trips and falls, we should at the very least be prioritising accessibility even if only for existing refurbishment and capital programmes.**



# The Agile Nation 2 Project

**C**hwarae Teg, the charity that works to help women in Wales achieve and prosper, is now delivering Agile Nation 2 - the successor to the highly successful Agile Nation project which ran from 2008 to 2014.

The European Social Fund and Welsh Government funded Agile Nation 2 project is running between 2015 and 2018, to provide a career development programme to 2,750 women, and a business programme to 500 small to medium sized businesses (SMEs) across Wales.

The aim of Agile Nation 2 is to promote gender equality, career advancement and improve the position of women in the workforce across all nine priority sectors in Wales. This is an important undertaking as women continue to be underrepresented in these sectors and is summed-up by Joy Kent, Chwarae Teg's Chief Executive who explains:

*"Our work over coming years will focus on the companies and sectors that have been identified*

*as important to the growth of the Welsh economy. Many of these sectors experience both significant skills gaps and the under-representation of women."*

The Agile Nation 2 project is offering women the chance to participate in a comprehensive, fully-funded career development programme. This has been designed to help them gain the skills, confidence and knowledge needed to effectively progress their career journeys.

It is ideal for women who are looking to gain their first supervisory or management positions and offers a number highly valuable benefits. These benefits include working with a dedicated People Development Partner, to create a personal career action plan, and goes on to provide accredited leadership and management training that culminates in an Institute of Leadership and Management qualification. Participants are also able to attend workshops and take advantage of further learning opportunities by applying for a training allowance.



**The aim of Agile Nation 2 is to promote gender equality, career advancement and improve the position of women in the workforce across all nine priority sectors in Wales.**

The Career Development Programme is being delivered across Wales to eligible women who are working in one of the nine priority sectors. These are: Tourism, Energy and Environment, Advanced Materials and Manufacturing, Life Sciences, Creative Industries, Information and Communication Technology, Food and Farming, Financial and Professional Services, and Construction.

Agile Nation 2 is building on the success of Agile Nation where the experiences of its participants help illustrate the benefits of participating in a comprehensive career development programme. One such example is Anwen Hopson who took part in our first project.

As Anwen explains, *“I received a huge amount of support from the Chwarae Teg team. The course was structured, friendly and easy to understand and not only did I learn a great deal, it also gave me a huge confidence boost.”*

After completing the programme, Anwen felt she was

ready to take the next step in her career and started applying for management roles. Initially struggling to secure work, she applied for a community support worker position, which was a move away from her current role and level she was working at but in a field she was keen to progress in. She clearly impressed as halfway through the interview she was offered a management position.

*“I have absolutely no doubt that the skills I learnt on the programme got me my dream job – there’s no way I would have felt able to sell myself otherwise. I am now a manager for a community support organisation called Anheddau where I head up a rapidly growing team, and I’m currently establishing us as a service provider in Ceredigion from scratch. I never thought I’d be doing anything like this when I was a 16 year old leaving school with a couple of GCSEs, or as a mum struggling to get my foot in the door, but I am – and it’s all thanks to Chwarae Teg.”*

Each programme includes five full days of training, delivered by Chwarae Teg’s own team, fortnightly over a ten week period. As with the Career Development Programme, the Business Programme is fully funded by the European Social Fund and Welsh Government.

A dedicated team with a wealth of experience of HR, Business Consultancy, Organisation Development and Equality and Diversity will work with businesses to deliver a specialist consultancy programme. This focuses on helping to review and develop workplace practices to create and develop a culture that improves performance and embraces equality and diversity in a way that is beneficial to both employees and the business.

Depending on the needs of the business this could include support around recruitment practices, staff retention, adopting modern working practices along with equality and diversity.

A central element to the Business Programme is the development of a Profile of Business Behaviour. This looks at the business from a gender diversity perspective and creates a measurable benchmark. From this starting point an agreed action programme is developed. The employer partner will also support the business with consultancy, advice and practical solutions to help deliver the actions. As this service differs with every business the exact nature of the support provided will vary and is bespoke to each business.

With the Business Programme, SMEs have the opportunity to gain access to the type of expert support that many large organisations use to develop working environments that embrace equality and diversity in a way that is mutually beneficial to both the business and its employees.



## 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 UHB and a Visiting Professor of Primary Care at the University of South Wales. He writes in a personal capacity.

## Can legislation change the culture of

**Y**ou may find a feedback pad as you leave shops loaded with your Christmas shopping. There is a range of faces from an angry red to an ecstatic green with an invitation to press the one that matches “your experience today”. I have been in meetings where this innovation is being considered for National Health Service settings. I

struggle with the idea that the complexities of an encounter between someone and the NHS can be encapsulated in one button.

In what senses are people in clinics, surgeries or on wards customers? Health Services and Social Services are settings where worried, angry, sad, unwell and disturbed people seek help



# our NHS?



**The National Health Service is not a Customer Service Organisation, it is a Human Service organisation working in partnership with the people of Wales.**

and support. This places additional responsibilities on those in the front line who provide the services that people need and expect. A checkout operator may be able to say “have a nice day” to each customer with little engagement with what is happening in their lives. It would be irresponsible for a receptionist, nurse or doctor to behave in that way.

I wonder if that is understood in Government. There are appropriate and understandable concerns about the quality and safety of the NHS, particularly as scandal after scandal hits the headlines. The consultation period for the Green Paper *Our Health Our Health Service* is coming to an end. The Green Paper opens with a letter from the Minister. Politicians should have vision, but surely they should also be pragmatic. The letter includes the sentence:

*We want to build a culture of continuous improvement, focused on unfailing quality of all services provided by the NHS in Wales.*

Is it wise to set an unachievable goal

at the outset by using the word ‘unfailing’? The National Health Service is not a Customer Service Organisation, it is a Human Service organisation’ working in partnership with the people of Wales. Failure is inevitable in a complex organisation delivering services to complex people in complex circumstances. The aims of a Quality Strategy are to minimise the risks of failure and harm and maximise the opportunities for success and achievement.

There are three categories of failure:

1. Slips and errors. These will always occur. They are an opportunity for learning and development and the Organisation should have measures in place to minimise the risks and harms of each occurrence.
2. Organisational and structural failings. Resources are a key concern in an age of austerity<sup>2</sup>. Are there enough staff available to deliver safe and effective services? Is the equipment that they need available? Have the necessary protocols and guidelines been disseminated and built into routine care processes? Resources for training, education and clinical governance activities have been very limited in recent years.
3. Personal failings. The health and wellbeing of people working in and for the NHS is key to ensuring safe judgement and action. Stress and workload impair this. The personal failings of individuals in many recent scandals are not because the person deliberately chose to make the wrong choices. They were a consequence of system and resource difficulties.

The questions throughout the Green Paper focus on legislation as a means of

changing culture and improving safety. Legislation will not reduce Type 1 events. Legislation may have a preventative effect on Type 3 events. The key question is:

How effective is legislation likely to be in changing the culture of an Organisation and the individuals working within it?

Richard Grol summarised the different strategies and approaches to Quality Improvement and change in an essay in 1997<sup>3</sup>. He helpfully characterises the different techniques, describing them as either internal or external.

Will a “coercive, external” method be effective? Is it being considered because the other methods have not been successful in Wales; because the resources in terms of money, staff and time are not available to the NHS in Wales in a time of austerity? All of the other interventions have been used in Wales over the last thirty years.

There have been many successes, although not all have been maintained as resources have diminished. Legislation does change behaviour and can change culture as a result. Would you wish your care to be delivered by properly trained, supported and resourced people whose compassion was a core component of their values and culture or by people whose behaviours were directed, constrained and measured by law and sanction?

1. Huntington J *A care-led NHS? In A Primary Care-Led NHS: Putting it into practice* ed. Meads G FT Healthcare London 1996  
 2. <http://www.kingsfund.org.uk/blog/2015/10/safe-staffing-nhs-comes-cost>  
 3. Grol R *Beliefs and evidence in changing clinical practice* BMJ 1997;315:418  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmj.315.7105.418>



## 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, and a Trustee of the Bevan Foundation.

### The shape of Wales to come?

The Bevan Foundation report, *The Shape of Wales to Come: Wales' Economy, Environment and Society In 2020* published in September 2015 paints a picture of what Wales could be like in 2020. It identifies the key issues that need to be addressed if we are to achieve the seven wellbeing goals that the public of Wales have identified they want in the national conversation initiated under The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

The Foundation's report identifies that "business as usual" is not an option, we have to find radically different ways of doing things if we are to secure the Wales we want and change the trajectory of some current trends. At a national level, and using an analysis of national statistics, urgent action is needed.

There is another more worrying trend that is not illuminated by looking at either national or even much of the local government data. It too, needs urgent action. It is the real and immediate challenge to the sustainability of many rural and valley communities caused by inadequate transport and ICT communications and a lack of local jobs. The impact is that young people with young families no longer want to live in these communities and many who currently do are leaving or trying to leave.

Blaenau Gwent is a one of the few Boroughs in Wales where the population is forecast to fall over the next few years. Within many other County Boroughs there are villages and towns where the same will happen and is already happening but where the statistics based on local government areas mask this trend.



To take Torfaen as an example, just as the economy of the UK is dominated by London, the economy of South Wales is dominated by Cardiff and the economy of Torfaen is dominated by Cwmbran leaving Blaenavon and the North of Torfaen as "also-rans". Planners will tell you that employers do not want to locate in the North of Torfaen despite encouragement. Housing statistics

show that young people do not want social housing in the North of Torfaen and house prices and private rental values show that people do not want to move there. My housing colleagues tell me similar patterns apply in many rural communities.

The initiatives to sign up for a City Deal for Cardiff, the Cardiff Metro, the Heads of the Valley road, electrification of rail services and the M4 relief road may help many areas to regenerate but there is unlikely to be any trickle down effect to North Torfaen which is bypassed by each and every one of these initiatives. In fact, these initiatives might make the situation worse in North Torfaen as the other communication improvements draw people to live in other better connected areas.

As well as a debate about how to achieve our national goals, we need an urgent debate about the future of many of the communities in Wales and how we are going to help them secure their future.



**Young people with young families no longer want to live many rural and valley communities...**



## Wellbeing *Sarah Stone*

Sarah Stone is Executive Director for Wales at Samaritans Cymru.



# Acting locally to reduce suicide in Wales

In Wales, there are between 300 and 350 suicides every year and the demand for the Samaritans service is growing - last year volunteers took a call every 3 minutes. In Wales, the suicide rate for men is at its highest since 1981, with male suicide rates rising by 23% between 2012 and 2013.

During Men's Health Week 2015, we launched our key messages for the Assembly elections 2016; 'Four Steps to Save Lives'. One of our steps asks Welsh Government to consider and address 'Acting locally' to reduce suicide in Wales.

Suicide is the result of many different factors which interact in complex ways. Suicide prevention therefore requires the action of many agencies across sectors. This is why suicide prevention strategies and action plans are a key component in reducing suicide. We welcome the second phase of Wales' suicide and self harm strategy and action plan 'Talk to me 2'. There needs to be a clear framework for implementation of this and we need to act locally to make sure the most effective ways of reducing suicide are in place across Wales.

Measures should include:

- Regional multi-agency suicide prevention fora should be mandatory and established consistently across Wales. They should create and work to local action plans and there should be a clear expectation of when these will be in place. They should be clear, comprehensive and sit within the context of the national plan.
- A systematic approach to a local 'suicide audit' which includes the collection of data about suicides.
- Frontline staff should receive suicide prevention training.
- Improved follow-up support for people



**Suicide prevention requires the action of many agencies across sectors.**

- attending A&E after self-harm or a suicide attempt.
- Safety measures at high-risk areas for suicide.
- Local specialist suicide bereavement counselling and support groups.
- Local services should ensure that effective signposting for listening and advocacy services are in place

Every local area in Wales has a unique

profile: a unique geography, economy, and population. It follows that a profile of deprivation and associated suicide risk will also vary between local populations.

In October, we launched our South Wales Valleys Pilot Project which aims to provide support to individuals, in their communities, across the South Wales Valleys. In addition to our key messages for the Assembly elections, we hope that our South Wales Valleys Pilot project is successful in reducing emotional distress by increasing access to the Samaritans emotional support service and encouraging help-seeking behavior through partnership working.

Suicide prevention involves mitigating and addressing inequalities. It involves actively improving access to sources of support, removing barriers and working with and enhancing the energy of local communities. Local implementation of suicide prevention plans is vital for efforts to reduce suicide rates; we must act locally to fulfil the national public health agenda in Wales.





Victoria Winckler, Director of the Bevan Foundation, with Leanne Wood AM, Leader of Plaid Cymru

## Can welfare work for Wales?

We recently launched our new project which seeks to identify areas of ‘poor fit’ between the benefits system and the needs and circumstances of people in Wales, and explore possible solutions including the potential for some elements of the benefits system to be devolved.

On Monday 16th November 2015 we held the first in a series of events which focussed on the question ‘can welfare work for Wales?’. Members and guests heard from Leanne Wood AM, Leader of Plaid Cymru, who delivered the keynote address, as well as a panel of representatives from Bron Afon Community Housing, Samaritans and The Trussell Trust.

In a baseline report published on the same day, we showed that in Wales there are:

- 619,885 children receiving child benefit;

- 237,000 working-age adults who are out of work;
- 164,000 low income families that are in work; and
- 651,900 state pension claimants.

The report also identifies significant trends and patterns emerging in Wales:

- There was an upwards trend in the number of pension claimants, rising by 7.8 percentage points between May 2012 and May 2015.
- In August 2015 there were almost 10,000 fewer housing benefit claims compared to May 2013.
- There were 42,680 Job Seekers’ Allowance claimants in May 2015, which is approximately equivalent to mid-2006 levels.

Keep an eye on your members’ newsletter and our website for further outputs and events related to our work on welfare in Wales.

## New taxes for a better Wales

As part of our work looking at the potential of new devolved taxes, we hosted ‘New Taxes for a Better Wales’ at the Future Inn, Cardiff Bay on Thursday 22nd October 2015. Delegates heard from Jane Hutt, Minister for Finance and Government Business, and David Phillips, Senior Research Economist at the Institute of Fiscal Studies. Ideas for new taxes were then discussed by a panel of representatives from the Plaid Cymru, Welsh Conservatives, Welsh Labour, and Welsh Liberal Democrats.

## What will Wales be like in 2020?

*The Shape of Wales to Come: Wales’ economy, environment & society in 2020* considers the rapid and significant change taking place in Wales right now. It concludes that the combination of issues and the lack of public resources to address them creates an unprecedented challenge – one that Wales’ current policies simply cannot address.

Our ground-breaking report had extensive media coverage on BBC Wales, WalesOnline and in the Western Mail and other regional newspapers. It looks at a wide range of independent forecasts of trends over the next five years, covering everything from changes in Gross Value Added to the likely increase in winter rainfall.

To download the full report, visit [www.bevanfoundation.org/publication/s/shape-wales-2020](http://www.bevanfoundation.org/publication/s/shape-wales-2020).

## News

- As the John Lewis Christmas advert emphasises loneliness and isolation BAVO wishes to highlight the fantastic work of befrienders. Sadly, referrals are coming in thick and fast, so more volunteer befrienders and drivers are desperately needed. Phone BAVO on 01656 810400, or your nearest County Voluntary Council to ask how you can get involved.
- Tenovus Cancer Care has once again teamed up with community pharmacies to deliver the 'Quit with Us' 2015 smoking cessation campaign, involving the distribution free nicotine replacement therapy packs. For further details, please contact Tim Banks on 02920768874 or [tim.banks@tenovuscancer.org.uk](mailto:tim.banks@tenovuscancer.org.uk)
- The Welsh Government has gained important new powers over how public procurement is regulated. This means that recent EU legislation can be exploited to ensure that those struggling to find decent work can access it where it is needed most. Wales TUC is campaigning at [betterjobswales.org](http://betterjobswales.org) to make this a reality in our valleys communities.
- An innovative programme working with disadvantaged communities in Wales has been launched. Building Communities Trust (BCT) has received £16.4 million Big Lottery Funding to run

its Invest Local programme, which gives funding and support to 13 communities across Wales over 12 years. To find out more, visit: [www.bct.wales](http://www.bct.wales)

- Businesses working with Tai Calon Community Housing are again supporting the company by donating to its Christmas appeal. They expect to beat last year's £6,500 total which bought food, clothing, presents, gas and electricity tokens for young people and families in Blaenau Gwent who would otherwise have gone without.
- RCN Wales has launched its Time to Care campaign ahead of the Assembly elections in May 2016. Following a survey of our members, they are calling on the next Welsh Government to ensure safe nurse staffing levels, achieve dignity and quality in personal care and value nurses through fair pay, protection from violence and access to continuous professional development: [tinyurl.com/timetocare2016](http://tinyurl.com/timetocare2016)
- Earlier this year the Cardiff Trussell Trust Foodbank took part in the Financial Triage & Debt Advice pilot study to help volunteers identify people clients with or vulnerable to debt or money-management problems and introduced them to specialist advisors at the foodbank centre. Due to its success, it will be offered through various members of the foodbank network from early 2016.

## Publications & Surveys

- Have you been to your local GP surgery to seek advice, treatment or support for mental health problems in the past 12 months? Gofal is conducting a survey to highlight good practice and call for service improvements. All responses are anonymous, it only takes 5 minutes and you could win a Kindle Fire! Complete the survey here: [www.surveymonkey.com/r/Snapshot15](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Snapshot15)
- On 13th November, the Welsh Government published its second annual report on palliative care in Wales. The report highlights excellent feedback from patients and their loved ones on how services in Wales make an enormous difference to people's quality of life in their closing days. It can be accessed via [gov.wales/topics/health/nhswales/plans/end-of-life-care/?lang=en](http://gov.wales/topics/health/nhswales/plans/end-of-life-care/?lang=en)

## Events

- The NHS Centre for Equality and Human Rights are part of a collaborative to develop the awareness and understanding amongst NHS Wales staff about the communication needs of patients with sensory loss. 'It makes SENSE' is launched at the Pierhead on 10th December, and they are asking health organisations to organise activities from 30th November 2015 to mark the first sensory loss awareness month.
- indycube are hosting their annual Festive Bonanza at Trade Street Cafe on 18th December to show their support for local and support independent businesses. They promise local beer, wine, crackers, and festivities so make sure you reserve a place: [www.indycube.cymru](http://www.indycube.cymru)

## AGM



The Bevan Foundation's AGM took place in Cardiff Bay on Wednesday 19th October 2015. Trustees and members came together to hear about how our work has changed Wales during the past year, and how we plan to take this forward over the coming months.

We would just like to take this opportunity to thank all those who came to this year's AGM, and to let you know that our annual review for 2014/15 is available to download from our website.



# Debbie Green

Chief Executive, Coastal Housing Group



## In 140 characters describe the Coastal Housing Group?

Coastal Housing Group is a social landlord based mainly in Swansea and Neath Port Talbot where we have 5,500 homes. Our aim is to enable our tenants to thrive and the communities we serve to prosper. Known for our urban regeneration work and innovation, we use lean systems thinking to help us provide high quality services and homes. We provide a holistic and personalised service based on “what matters” to tenants to help them realise their ambitions; this may range from supporting younger people leaving care, through to digital and financial inclusion work, support solutions for older people or helping people with employability, skills and finding a job. Our main office is based in one of our regeneration schemes in High Street, Swansea. We employ over 200 staff and are working towards gaining our accreditation as a living wage employer.

## What is your role at the Coastal Housing Group?

I am the relatively newly appointed Chief Executive at Coastal. Before that I was the Finance Director. Because I am the Chief Executive I am responsible for everything that we do, but reliant on everyone else, my staff and senior team, to deliver our services and plans. I am the public face of Coastal so I also spend time with external stakeholders locally and nationally.

## What do you enjoy most about working at the Coastal Housing Group?

I am passionate about creating a more equal society and the housing crisis is a one of the factors currently driving increasing inequality, therefore I enjoy being able to make a real difference in the community both by improving the availability of affordable homes and also by helping people live better lives. I also get to lead a really great team of highly motivated and creative staff and their commitment gives me a real buzz. Because of the diversity of what we do as an organisation no one day is the same, talking to politicians, planning major regeneration projects, supporting tenants to meet the challenges of welfare reform or practical things like going out and about with housing and

caretaking staff on our estates, are all part of my role.

## If the Coastal Housing Group were a biscuit what would it be?

At Coastal we say we are not like other housing associations so if it were a biscuit it would have to be a Jaffa cake – which is not like other biscuits because it is a cake!

## What are the biggest challenges facing the Coastal Housing Group?

The biggest challenges facing us are those facing our tenants, welfare reform especially bedroom tax and direct payment of rent to the tenant rather than the landlord. We know that roughly 1,000 of our tenants are in financial distress, and this applies to those in work as well as not in work, and these people are increasingly having to make decisions between whether they can afford food, to heat their homes or pay the rent. As a result we are fundamentally restructuring the way we work to deliver a pro-active support service working with tenants to improve their lives. Successfully sustaining tenancies is key both to help our tenants but also to ensure we secure our rental streams so that we can continue to provide additional services over and above the traditional landlord offer.

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

Germaine Greer, it is always good to invite an opinionated women!, Clement Attlee, a great Labour leader, George Orwell, to ask him how prophetic he thinks his novel 1984 was and what he thinks of our current politicians, and John Maynard Keynes to discuss whether there is any validity in austerity as an economic argument, and what he would do instead.

## Why are you members of the Bevan Foundation?

Firstly because one of your Trustees twisted my arm! But seriously because having a foundation devoted to thought leadership in Wales is becoming increasingly important as Wales finds its feet and its policy increasingly diverges from that of the government in Westminster. Also I absolutely share the Bevan Foundation’s vision for a fair, prosperous and sustainable Wales.



**'Wales can't prosper while the valleys struggle.'**

*Watch my story at*  
[www.betterjobswales.org](http://www.betterjobswales.org)

**Better Jobs Closer to Home**

Our Valleys communities need Better Jobs; Closer to Home. Brand new powers for the Welsh Government offer a fresh chance to make that happen. WALES TUC - powered by Welsh trades unions is campaigning to make this opportunity a reality.

Join us Today!

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Rydym yn rhoi cyngor o 375 o leoliadau cymunedol yng Nghymru.

Rydym hefyd yn cynnig cyngor dros y ffôn ac ar-lein.

We give advice from 375 community locations in Wales.

We also offer advice over the phone and online.

Mae hyn yn rhoi cipolwg unigryw i anghenion a phryderon pobl. Rydym yn defnyddio'r wybodaeth hon i ymgyrchu ar y materion pwysig, yn lleol a chenedlaethol. Felly un ffordd neu'r llall, rydym yn helpu pawb - nid yn unig y rhai rydym yn eu cefnogi yn uniongyrchol.

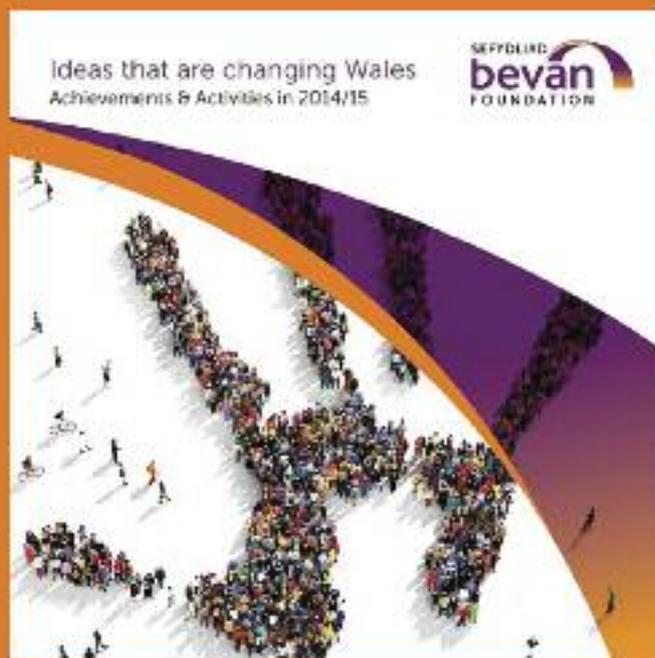
This gives us a unique insight into people's needs and concerns. We use this knowledge to campaign on the big issues, both locally and nationally. So one way or another, we're helping everyone - not just those we support directly.



cyngor ar bopeth  
citizens advice

**Y Llinell Gyngor Adviceline Cymru**  
03444 77 20 20  
[citizensadvice.org.uk](http://citizensadvice.org.uk)

## Our 2014/15 Annual Review is out now

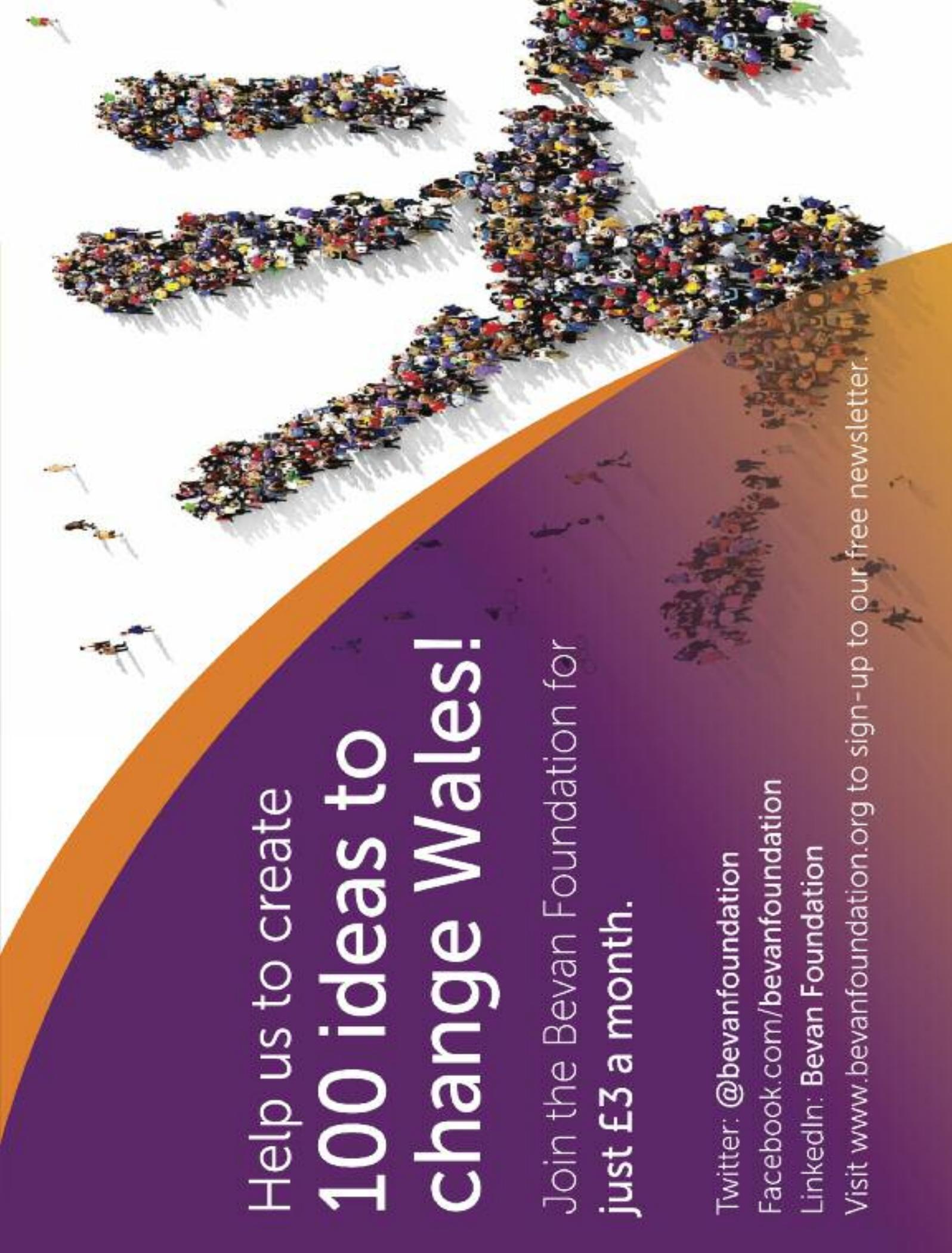


Ideas that are changing Wales  
Achievements & Activities in 2014/15

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**bevan**  
FOUNDATION

Find out how our work and your donations and funding helped to change Wales in the last year

Download the 2014/15 Annual Review from [www.bevanfoundation.org](http://www.bevanfoundation.org)



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**100 ideas to  
change Wales!**

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