

Let Us Face the
Future Together

VOTE FOR

WALE

Senedd
Election
Manifesto
2021



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**VOTE FOR
WALES**

On May 6th Wales will choose a new Welsh Government.

As we emerge from the shadow of Covid-19, this is our chance to choose a new path, a path to a better future that only we ourselves can build, a future of fresh possibilities, new energy and hope.

It is my sincere belief that in this election, Plaid Cymru is presenting the most radically ambitious and transformational programme offered by any party in any Welsh election since 1945.

It looks forward to the confident, successful Wales that we can become – an equal nation and a nation of equals – and it sets out the practical, deliverable and fully costed policies that we can put to work to bring about that new nation.

It speaks of and to a country that has come of age, whose next chapter will be fairer, greener, and more prosperous than the decades of disappointment that came before it.

This manifesto sets out our ideas and our vision to create that brighter future, together, under the fresh leadership of a Plaid Cymru Welsh Government.

Now is our opportunity to create that new future. We will give every child in Wales the best start in life. We will deliver a plan for the whole country to prosper – creating thousands of quality jobs in every part of Wales. We will make household budgets go further through a fairer deal for families, workers and small business. We will learn the lessons of the pandemic, by delivering a seamless national health and care service and we will face up to the climate and biodiversity crisis by taking the radical action the moment requires of us. We will end child hunger, fuel poverty and homelessness within five years. And pledge ourselves to building a nation that delivers the opportunity of a decent life for all.

This Spring is our historic opportunity for us to decide to become the authors of that brighter future ourselves.

For the first time ever in a Senedd election the people of Wales will be able to vote to take their own future into their own hands. We believe independence to be the only sure and sustainable means to achieving social and economic progress. So a Plaid Cymru Government will empower the people of Wales to decide the future of our nation in an independence referendum.

But the work of building tomorrow's Wales starts today. As your First Minister, I will operate on the premise that there is no problem in Wales that Wales cannot solve. I will use all my energy and every lever at my disposal to realise the collective potential of our nation and to bring opportunity and prosperity to the whole of Wales.

Growing up in the Amman Valley, the son of a Welsh miner and an English mother, I saw rural Wales to the west and industrial Wales to the east. I realised that ultimately what unites us as a nation, Welsh-speaking and non-Welsh Speaking, urban and rural, north, south, east and west, is far more important, far more enduring than anything that divides us.

I will be a First Minister for the whole of Wales and for everyone in Wales, for Wales today and Wales tomorrow, a nation determined to realise its potential so that everyone within it can realise theirs.

The future can be better than the past, if we resolve to create it.

So let us face the future together and take this first step on May 6th.

Vote for Wales. Pleidleisiwch o blaid Cymru.

Adam Price

OUR VISION

Our Vision: A Programme for Wales' Future

To look forward, we must look back. We need to understand our problems to have confidence that the future will be different. This programme for a Plaid Cymru Welsh Government is grounded in the history of our nation and has been shaped by the experiences of our people over the last 12 months.

Lessons of the pandemic for our post-Covid future

1. It's up to us

There is nothing we cannot do together as a nation. By following our own path – a path that's right for our communities and a path that's right for Wales – we've seen some of the most effective action. The Covid crisis has reaffirmed the value of the limited measure of self-government we have, and shown the importance of acting independently from Westminster.

From Ceredigion's early contact tracing system to the local primary care teams who, fed up of waiting for a centralised health system far removed from their communities to organise the vaccine rollout, came together and did it for themselves. We've seen that the people who live and work in Wales are best placed to keep us safe. The solutions to our problems will come from all of us, collectively, not from the distant power of another parliament in another place or from a government which we did not elect meddling in our affairs.

2. The services and goods we all depend on are priceless

We've come to recognise and appreciate how much we depend on basic services that are crucial for our survival and the value of the providers such as our food producers. We cannot afford not to invest properly in the most basic necessities.

However, Wales is trapped into a Westminster political system that is increasingly based on selfishness and greed. It does not reflect our values, nor guarantees our most basic needs. Public services outsourced and stripped to the bone by Westminster's decade of austerity left us exposed and underprepared in the eye of the storm.

Closer to home, we've also seen a system that has gone seriously wrong – a higher education system which is driven not by education but by the market, which puts profits before students and public health. We've seen the con that is the notion of providing care – one of our most fundamental needs as humans – for profit. In Wales, like in England, we have also fallen into the trap of spending public money to lure in companies from the outside to provide jobs, rather than growing our own small and medium sized businesses. We've offered generous government subsidies for the transport network – which is there to serve all of us – to be run as a business, only for the business owners to walk away when there is no longer a profit to be made. In the end, it's the Welsh taxpayer who has to foot the bill and pay the price of towing the Westminster line and following Westminster's mindset.

3. Anything is possible, if we want it to happen

The pandemic has forced change and shown what is possible when politicians and public service leaders had to change, and change quickly familiar and comfortable ways of working. There has been much talk of ending homelessness over twenty years of devolution, but the political will was lacking. When Covid struck, the tired status quo was forced into action and homelessness was ended overnight on the streets of Cardiff. We can't go back to how things were before.



Our Vision: A Programme for Wales' Future

4. Britain is broken

Over the past months, we have seen the best and the worst of humanity. The best – in the unfaltering, unstinting work of our local key workers and volunteers. The worst – in the Westminster politicians in power who reacted too late and brought us extreme inequality, and with it the highest death rate in Europe.

Indeed, the pandemic has exposed the reality of modern Britain: a state defined by crushing poverty, ruled by a corrupt élite that gives contracts to its friends and denies furlough to its neighbours, spending billions on a failed contact tracing system run for profit by the private sector. We saw beyond any doubt that Westminster provides no 'insurance policy' as it didn't pay out when we needed to extend furlough to have a longer Firebreak in November last year.

In developed countries, it is those with deeper inequalities that have the highest number of deaths – the United States and the United Kingdom – as societies not united but divided by class, geography, race and wealth. But Wales, by 2021, had suffered the worst death rate even in the context of Britain. We also saw that Westminster is no vehicle to advance the interests of working people or improve anyone's lives – like Wales, the effects of the pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on post-industrial communities, in northern England too, and exacerbated the longstanding regional disparities of the British state. In contrast, as an independent country, we could have paid people to isolate properly and get ahead of the virus.

5. The people of Wales must take charge of their future

As if there was ever any doubt we can now say categorically that Westminster does not work for Wales. Whichever London party is in charge, Wales will never be Westminster's priority and our priorities will not be guaranteed by Westminster. Wales and Westminster are increasingly two different universes in which:

- There is a 1 per cent pay rise for nurses and a 44 per cent increase for nuclear weapons.
- There is historic underfunding in our country's railways, whilst more than £100 billion is spent on HS2 which will connect the country next door with no consequential for a high speed railway between the north and south of our country.
- £12 billion is spent on renovating the Palace of Westminster, whilst Wales' directly elected parliament is bypassed and stripped of its powers, undermining the devolution that the people of Wales have voted for on no less than 14 occasions, through two referendums and delivering pro-devolution majorities in every election since 1997.

The time has come for Wales to choose its future – a future in our hands or a future determined in and by Westminster.

The prior pandemic

The word emergency comes from the Latin word for emergence – to bring to light. And Covid-19 has certainly brought to the fore the prior pandemic which has been busily chipping away at the fabric of Welsh society and our people's life chances for far too long. The disease of poverty, of low pay and poor housing, the scourge of gender and racial inequality, the civic decay of our democratic deficit. The statistics speak for themselves.

- **Child hunger** – There are 70,000 children in poverty in Wales that don't even receive free school meals.
- **Housing crisis** – 67,000 families on housing waiting lists.
- **Poverty wages** – Over half of our care workers are paid less than the Real Living Wage.
- **Life expectancy** – Even before the pandemic, avoidable deaths were twice as likely in poorer parts of Wales compared to more affluent parts of the country.

Our Vision: A Programme for Wales' Future

- **Racial inequality** – You're five and a half times more likely to go to prison if you're black than if you're white in the US; in Wales, the figure is six and a half.
- **Gender based violence and inequality** – A woman is killed by a man every 3 days in the UK.
- **Environment**– Air pollution causes around 2,000 deaths per year in Wales and the current target for Wales of Net Zero carbon emissions by 2050 is not fast enough to meet the scale of the challenge we face.
- **Information deficit** – Almost 40 per cent of people in Wales don't know that the Welsh Government is responsible for Health whilst key public health messages got convoluted in the pandemic by a UK media which does not serve Wales' needs.
- **Democratic deficit** – Wales has never elected a majority of Tory MPs, but we've had Conservative Governments in Westminster two thirds of the time since WW2

Facing the future together – building a new Wales

We are not the country that we should be. We are not the country that we can be. And we are not the country we want to be.

Wales faces a moment of truth. This election is about the future. The future cannot be like the past. And it will not be if we decide on our own future.

That's the historic opportunity we have in front of us at this election. As our forebears did after World War II, we can decide to face the future together and build a new country. In the 20th century it was Britain, now in the 21st century it's a new Wales.

Wales has incredible potential as a nation. The problems that have we had for generations are not inevitable. We can solve these problems, together. But the first step is electing a new Government that has the ambition to build a new Wales that's better than the old.

Plaid Cymru's Programme for Government will be based around delivering five main goals.

1. The best start in life for every child

- Free school meals to all primary school children using quality Welsh produce.
- Investing in 4,500 extra teachers and support staff, reducing class sizes, and valuing the teaching profession.
- Childcare free for all from 24 months.

2. A plan for the whole country to prosper

- A £6bn Green Economic Stimulus to help create 60,000 jobs.
- A guaranteed job or high-quality training for 16–24-year-olds.
- Zero interest loans to support small businesses to bounce back post-Covid.

3. A fair deal for families

- Cut the bills of average Council Taxpayers, helping the weekly budget go further.
- £35 per child weekly top-up payment to families living below the poverty line.
- 50,000 social and affordable homes, and fair rents for the future.

4. The best national health and care service

- Train and recruit 1,000 new Doctors and 5,000 new Nurses and allied staff.
- Free personal care at the point of need for the elderly, ending the divide between health and social care.
- Guaranteed minimum wage of £10 an hour for care workers.

Our Vision: A Programme for Wales' Future

5. Tackling the climate emergency

- Set a Wales 2035 Mission to decarbonise and to reach net zero emissions.
- Establish Ynni Cymru as an energy development company with a target of generating 100 per cent of electricity from renewables by 2035.
- Introduce a Nature Act with statutory targets to restore biodiversity by 2050.

These commitments are the foundation of our Programme for Government for the next five years. But if we are to fully realise our potential as a nation, we need Wales to have the power to make all the big decisions which impact on our day to day lives.

Independence isn't just about constitutional reform, it's the only way that we will ultimately create a more sustainable future for our country, delivering social and economic justice.

Wales' future in Wales' hands

A Plaid Cymru First Minister will let the people of Wales, not Westminster, decide on our future and a Plaid Cymru Government will hold a referendum on independence by 2026, giving the Welsh people the democratic right to decide whether they agree with us that all decisions affecting Wales should be made in Wales.



Our Vision: A Programme for Wales' Future

A Wales transformed by 2030 – the national mission of a Plaid Cymru Government

The commitments contained in this manifesto will set Wales on a new path. A Plaid Cymru Government will fulfil the commitments in this fully costed programme for government in the first term, but they also form part of our wider long term vision for Wales' future and for a Wales transformed by 2030. We will govern for today and prepare for tomorrow to deliver a country transformed by the turn of this decade as we seek to build a new, sustainable, equal and socially just independent nation. These are the objectives underpinning our Wales 2030 national mission.

- The Welsh economy will be locally owned and pay high wages.
- Jobs and investment will be shared equitably across the whole country.
- The economy will be more balanced and diverse and our public finances will be stronger.
- The talent we have in Wales will be developed and retained.
- Our energy will be completely renewable and owned and generated locally.
- Wales will be decarbonised and will produce no emissions.
- Our natural environment and biodiversity will thrive.
- Our agricultural sector will be a key component of an increasingly localised food system.
- People will live longer, fitter lives in a healthier society that prevents sickness.
- Older people will maintain their independence and dignity as they get older and will receive support when they need it.
- Our citizens will be amongst the most educated and highly skilled globally.
- Our society will protect women, children and the vulnerable.
- Everybody will have a right to a home.
- Power and accountability will rest as close as possible to the people and our country's national institutions will be accountable to the people they serve.
- Nobody's votes will be wasted and our democracy will reflect all the voices and will be representative of Wales' diverse population at each tier of government.
- The citizens of Wales will be informed and engaged and will receive the information necessary to hold decision makers to account.
- The Welsh language will be normalised and used as a language for living, working and public and private administration.
- Racism, misogyny and other forms of discrimination and intolerance will be eradicated.
- Our citizens will share a common understanding of the diverse history, cultural heritage, ethnic diversity, identity, experiences and perspectives of Wales, and Wales' national identity will be strengthened as an inclusive, progressive bond for the common good.
- The Welsh state will enshrine the basic rights of its citizens in a written charter of citizens' rights and responsibilities, based on a national citizenship of equals which embraces inclusion and diversity.
- Communities in every part of Wales will be sustainable, well-connected and individuals will have access to key amenities and services closer to home.
- Transport links between the north and south, east and west will make travel within Wales easier and quicker.
- Super-fast broadband will be available to every property and business in Wales.
- Wales will play its part as a nation in its own right on the world stage in striving for peace.
- Wales will face up to the responsibilities of our past and the realities of our present.

Our Vision: A Programme for Wales' Future

A home for everyone in Plaid – and a Cymru for all

From the beginning, Plaid has been driven by the idea not so much of what Wales is, but what it could become. To build a national community based on equal citizenship, respect for different traditions and cultures and the equal worth of all individuals, whatever their race, language of choice, nationality, gender, colour, faith, sexuality, age, ability or social background. These are our core values.

The brighter future for Wales, under the fresh leadership of a Plaid Cymru Government, we set out in these pages can only be achieved together.

The idea of Wales as a community of communities, united in its diversity, has always been at the heart of Plaid Cymru's mission. When our nation joins as one – north and south, east and west, citizens old and new – and dares to realise the power we hold – nothing will stand in our way.

Building an Equal Nation and a Nation of Equals – an independent country looking out to the world and letting the world in is at the core of our programme.

There is a home for everyone in Plaid and the Cymru we will build together will be a Cymru i bawb – a Wales for all.

Let us face the future together.



SPREADING PROSPERITY

Summary

- Create a £6bn Green Economic Stimulus which will generate 60,000 jobs over the five-year term.
- Establish a national Youth Job Guarantee for every 16 to 24-year-old.
- Base an alternative economic strategy on a Local First principle, increasing Welsh firms' share of contracts from 52 to 75 per cent of the public procurement budget.
- Create Prosperity Wales, an arms-length development agency, to focus on growing small and medium-sized Welsh firms.
- Develop Industrial Innovation Clusters in key areas of the economy.
- Expand the role of the Development Bank of Wales and support the creation of a Community Bank to help domestically owned businesses grow their market share.



Spreading Prosperity

Economic Goals: A New Approach

The Welsh economy is failing to deliver the basic components of a decent life for too many of our people. That must and will change.

We will place at the heart of our economic policy the achievement of a decent life for all our citizens and the reduction of inequality. Economic progress must become the vehicle for the achievement of social justice, individual wellbeing and environmental resilience. The economy is about a lot more than just the production of goods for market, it's about having everything we need in order to grow, flourish and thrive as a society.

We will change how we measure economic success, adopting two primary measures:

1. An increase in the number and a more equal distribution of good quality jobs.
2. A reduction in inequalities in net disposable household income between Wales and the rest of the UK, and within Wales itself, based on place, gender and ethnicity.

In comparing Wales' performance internationally, we will adopt a more comprehensive indicator than GDP – the Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare or an internationally recognised equivalent.

A Welsh Green Deal

A Plaid Cymru government will take immediate steps to plan and deliver a £6 billion programme of investment to support Wales' ongoing economic recovery from the Covid-19 crisis. This will comprise £4bn extra investment in infrastructure and £2bn extra spending on the foundational economy over the course of the five-year term.

We will immediately task the National Infrastructure Commission, working with the Future Generations Commissioner and the Development Bank, local government partners and others, to turn its State of the Nation report due to be published in May into a detailed schedule of investable projects that will lay the foundations of a new resilient Wales.

Investment plans will include measures to:

- Expand and electrify the rail network.
- Retrofit thousands of homes to the highest environmental standards.
- Build thousands of new social homes to address unmet housing need.
- Develop a sustainable Welsh food and farming system.
- Invest in decarbonisation research (for example, for key industrial sectors such as steel, and emerging Welsh strengths in hydrogen and marine energy).
- Grow Welsh ownership of the renewable sector.
- Build the facilities for Wales to become a world leader in offshore wind.
- Repurpose empty shops and offices.
- Achieve Gigabit connection throughout Wales.
- Ensure that new jobs and investment benefits groups and places that face structural barriers to work and have been underrepresented in the workforce, as part of our Nation of Equals agenda.

Spreading Prosperity

Financing the Welsh Green Deal

The current devolution settlement cannot cope with the economics of Covid-19 nor the ongoing impact of Brexit. We need an expansion of economic powers for Wales, and especially increased capacity for the Welsh Government to borrow to invest our way to recovery. In the short-term Welsh Government must be allowed greater flexibility to deal with the current crisis. This should include:

- Suspension of the £150m annual borrowing limit.
- Removal of the annual limit on drawdowns from the Welsh reserve.
- Increasing the Welsh Government's overall borrowing capacity from £1 billion to £5 billion over five years, front-loaded, to immediately address the economic impact of Covid-19 and Brexit. Interest payments would be an estimated £120 million per year which will come from the Welsh Government budget.

However, if Westminster should refuse to grant us the increased borrowing capacity we need we will implement an alternative plan. Our detailed alternative financing plan would include the following elements:

- A national Green Growth Deal in conjunction with local authorities, building on the existing City and Growth Deals.
- Greater Use of Financial Transaction Capital, for example, in funding housing projects as suggested, by Carmarthenshire Council and the housing association Tirion.
- Appropriate use of the Mutual Investment Model, adapting its use to additional areas.
- Investment by the UK Infrastructure Bank and other institutional investors such as the Wales Pension Partnership.
- Exploring a Welsh Green Bond as proposed by the OECD.

Spreading Prosperity

Alongside this investment programme we will put the National Infrastructure Commission for Wales on a statutory footing, widening its scope to include social infrastructure, and merging it with the Design Commission for Wales, thereby turning it into a 'centre of excellence' for public infrastructure design and delivery.

The Welsh Youth Job Guarantee

Faced with the prospect of mass youth unemployment we will guarantee secure employment, on at least a Real Living Wage to every 16-24-year-old not in full-time education. We will create a National Employment Plan to set out the jobs we need to create to meet the Youth Guarantee. It will focus, in particular, on our plans for expanding jobs and training places in health, social care, childcare and education, in construction and in the low carbon economy.

From Wales, For Wales: A Smarter Economy

Wales has one of the lowest levels of local business ownership of any advanced economy. That must change. Time and time again public money has been spent to attract new investment and either the investor then exports the profits or simply walks away. This has been the story of economic development in Wales for over 50 years.

Instead, our plans for a smarter economy will be based on expanding, supporting, and protecting domestic businesses.

Local First

We will adopt a new Local First policy built around local ownership of the economy, infrastructure, and business, and a sustainable skills base for a revived workforce and economy.

As part of this we will create a Welsh model of local public procurement built on the foundational economy.

Using the Welsh Government's own £6.3 billion procurement budget and by working in close partnership with other public sector bodies, we will set a target of increasing the level of public sector procurement from 52 per cent to 75 per cent of the total spend. This will create an estimated 46,000 additional jobs.

We will:

- Seek urgent public sector wide agreement to extend contracts with Welsh businesses in key sectors such as food for a minimum of two years to give increased economic security during Covid recovery.
- Identify and approach potential Welsh suppliers of products and services currently procured outside Wales to plug the leakages to the Welsh economy.
- Use to the maximum the new freedoms post-Brexit to give preference to Welsh businesses in public procurement.
- Pass a Public Procurement Act placing a statutory duty on public bodies to adhere to national procurement guidelines.
- Further drive up the number of jobs created by increasing the level of Welsh content purchased by the public sector's first and second tier suppliers.
- Break up contracts where possible into the smallest possible lots to enable small companies to bid.
- Strip out the bureaucracy from public sector tendering processes.
- Commit to ending and reversing outsourcing in the public sector, bringing activities back in-house or at least under local control and delivery.
- Use social procurement to drive forward other objectives including supporting self employment by, and employment for, under represented groups including women and people of colour, the growth of co-operative businesses and the use of the Welsh language in the workplace.

Spreading Prosperity

Make it Welsh

In the private and mutual sector, we will set targets to substantially increase the proportion of our economy which is domestically owned.

We will:

- Prioritise locally owned business over profit-exporting corporations as the foundation of our economy.
- Develop a strategy to scale-up existing businesses with high growth potential.
- Introduce a business succession programme and appropriate financial support to retain Welsh ownership of successful firms, with a special focus in expanding the number of employee-owned businesses.
- Create a 'Made in Wales' official brand that will be carried by any product or service where 50 per cent of the value is created in Wales.
- Launch buy Welsh and buy local campaigns to raise levels of Welsh consumption of Welsh produced goods and services.
- Encourage innovative agricultural products and producers of healthy local food.
- Develop public distribution systems so small and medium-sized businesses no longer find themselves blocked from market access (where this is monopolised by supermarkets, big retailers and online platforms like Amazon or Uber) and can sell directly to consumers.

Prosperity Wales: An Economic Development Agency for the 21st Century

We will establish Prosperity Wales, an arms-length all-Wales development agency to provide effective policy delivery, focusing on:

- Developing a stronger base of medium sized companies between 50 and 250 people.
- Place-based development and the foundational economy.
- University-business collaboration, especially around innovation strategies.
- Decarbonisation and the green industrial revolution.
- The Welsh public sector's £6.3 billion procurement budget.
- Targeted inward investment, in particular attracting globally mobile business investment in R&D and early stage businesses to Wales.
- Manufacturing-led exports, modelling ourselves on small nation super exporters such as Ireland, Denmark, and Finland.
- Tackling inequality between communities and amongst unrepresented groups.
- Management training for SME staff, and technical training for the wider workforce.

Prosperity Wales will work closely with the Arfor Agency for the western seaboard of Wales and Cymoedd, the Valleys Development Authority. It will be built on the foundation of the Development Bank for Wales which already has some 200 staff working out of bespoke offices in Cardiff, Llanelli, and Wrexham. The two will be combined within a single organization, with a single board, but with the identity and operation of the Development Bank retained as the main financial arm of the organisation.

Spreading Prosperity

Fair Pay, Fair Play

The principal aim of our economic policy will be raising standards of living through the creation of fairly paid, high-quality jobs in every part of Wales. We will create sixty thousand new jobs over the course of the Senedd term including:

- New well-paid jobs in the foundational economy expanding employment in people-related jobs less vulnerable to automation, especially in care giving, teaching and the arts.
- Thousands of new jobs through our Welsh Green Deal in construction, engineering, energy, food, built environment and nature.

We will drive down levels of Welsh economic inactivity by:

- Implementing our Welsh Youth Jobs Guarantee Scheme.
- Extending free childcare to all two year-olds.
- Investing in preventative strategies that reduce ill health.
- Developing a strategy, and introducing incentives, to reduce the out-migration of young people, and attract those who have left to return.
- Encourage employers to adopt modern working practices and embrace remote and distributed working which are key to making work more accessible to women, disabled people, and other groups historically underrepresented in the workforce.

As public sector wages often set the ‘wage floor’ in many local economies in Wales, raising the wage levels of the lowest-paid workers will become an important means of moving away from a low-wage economy. We will:

- Raise the minimum wage of care workers to £10 an hour and introduce parity of pay between health and care.

- Use Fair Work commitments in public procurement and in return for financial support.

Together with employers and employee representatives, our Government will establish new sector-based social partnership bodies across the economy, with an initial focus on low-pay sectors.

Given the existing devolved settlement, these bodies are likely to be advisory in the first instance. They will work to jointly agree long-term goals for sectors in Wales and set minimum standards for pay and targets for wage growth.

Critical to our vision for the economy is investment in the skills and knowledge of our people which are the bedrock of future prosperity. We will invest in major training programmes, with targets for women and other groups historically under-represented in the workforce in areas where we need new skills such as construction, environment, health and care, and digital.

Over the long-term we need to prepare for a future where work may have a different role in the economy as a result of automation and the application of AI and related technologies. We will seek the powers necessary to introduce a universal basic income as a means of ensuring economic dignity for all and will implement a Welsh pilot for a Universal Basic Income.

Innovation and Entrepreneurship

At the heart of our economic strategy is our goal of diversifying our economy, launching new businesses in new areas. This means that driving up levels of innovation and entrepreneurship will be critical.

Spreading Prosperity

We will invest in creating a culture of creativity, enterprise and innovation throughout every sector – public, private and non-profit – and in every area of life.

We will support the creation of Industrial Innovation Clusters each with a designated lead body to develop Industrial Transformation Roadmaps.

We will create a National Innovation Body, replacing the Innovation Advisory Council for Wales and the Chief Science Adviser's Council to become the pre-eminent body to lead and coordinate the Welsh innovation system, focussed on our economic, environmental, and societal priorities. We will set the ambitious goal of raising business investment in R&D every year until it reaches the UK average and increase Wales' share of UK public R&D funding.

Investment as an Economic Driver

To nurture Wales' economic independence, we will:

- Seek agreement from the UK Treasury for the Development Bank of Wales to act more fully as a bank, for example in borrowing from sources such as pension funds to lend to the public as well as the private sector.
- Establish a Small and Medium Enterprise Investment Strategy including long term loans at zero interest with long repayment holidays, restart loans, repayment and recovery loans and new deals for early stage and growth companies.
- Create an infrastructure division of the Development Bank, mirroring the work of the UK Infrastructure Bank.
- Establish a specific structure, as a subsidiary of the Development Bank, to manage Welsh Government stakes in businesses.

- Invest in a new Community Bank to help small business and return local banking services to customers in the many communities in Wales which have lost their local banks.
- Explore the creation of a Welsh Green Bond to invest in the environment, economy, and infrastructure, and retain a greater share of savings in Wales.



Specialty Coffee

FINCA EL CORRAL	
Región Santa Fe	
Toro El Socorro	
Variedad Bonaire	
Procesado: Wash Process	
Altitud: 1800 msnl	
Soave, Densidad Alta	
Soavidad: 22 Calores	
<hr/>	
Agrewero	2.2
Cartado	2.4
Flat White	2.7
Long Black	2.7
Americano	2.4
Latte	2.9
Cappuccino	2.9
Tea	2.5

CHOCOLATE	2.3
Direct Trade	
Wilton Coffee	

Loose Leaf Tea

English Breakfast	2.2
Earl Grey	2.2
Earl Grey	2.7
Opuscula Antigua	2.7
Chai Tea	3.0
Peppermint	2.7
Orange Blossom Green	2.9
French Breakfast White	2.9
Jasmine Green	3.0
Kidney Bean	2.7
Juniper + Rose Hips	3.0
<hr/>	
Chai Latte	3.2
Matcha Latte	3.2

Hot Chocolate

Milk Hot Chocolate	2.9
Dark Hot Chocolate	2.6
White Hot Chocolate	3.2
Sea Salt + Caramel	3.2
70% Dark Hot Chocolate	3.2

KIN+ILK

MicroMillik

kin+ilk.com



BUILDING THE NATION

Summary

- Create six strategic economic regions to spread prosperity equitably across the whole country.
- Establish a dedicated Office for Regional Development and Investment to lead regional development and decentralise government across Wales.
- Set up Cymoedd, the Valleys Development Authority, with a remit to drive the economic opportunities associated with the Valleys Metro.
- Interlink economic development, language planning, transport, and investment in the western coastal Arfor region so that its young people have access to high-skilled, well-paid jobs in their local communities.
- Produce exciting development plans for Clwyd, Powys, Swansea Bay and south-east Wales.
- Strengthen grassroots democracy with reformed Community and Town Councils.

Building the Nation

Transforming economic and spatial planning

Plaid Cymru has a completely new vision for Welsh economic development and investment, based on building, connecting and empowering the nation and all of our communities. Our priority is to address the inequalities between the poorer and richer parts of the country.

Wales' current strategic planning regions are a response to Westminster priorities, including the UK Government's City and Growth Deals and Shared Prosperity funds. They write off three-quarters of Wales in terms of economic and cultural viability and continue to make our future dependent on the crumbs off somebody else's table, rather than serving as a vehicle to connect our communities north and south, east and west, and realise the potential of our own country.

Our alternative vision is a plan for the whole of Wales to prosper, focused on:

1. **Distributing wealth, power, and investment equitably across the whole of Wales by targeting intervention to the areas in most need.**
2. **Improving connectivity from north to south as well as east to west.**
3. **Making Wrexham the financial capital of Wales, building on its role as home for the Development Bank of Wales. We will site the headquarters of Prosperity Wales, our new economic development agency, in Wrexham, as well as seeking to attract other new institutions such as a Community Bank.**
4. **Unlocking the sustainable development potential of the whole of our diverse nation.**

These priorities do not mean we will turn our backs on progress that has been made by the individual projects advanced successfully by local authorities with the UK Government's City and Growth Deals. However, we will align

them with the need to spread investment and prosperity more equitably across Wales as a whole.

To facilitate the delivery of our alternative vision, Plaid Cymru believes that Wales' future governance should continue to involve local, regional and national tiers in decision making and delivery at the correct levels and with clear democratic accountability to the people. To this end, we will replace Labour's four planning regions and their corresponding undemocratic Corporate Joint Committees with six strategic regions to spread prosperity equitably across the country.

We will create a dedicated Office for Regional Development and Investment located in the First Minister's Department to lead regional development across government.

We will provide funding and dedicated economic organisations for the southern Valleys and the western coast, a region we call Arfor. We will make the Valleys and the Arfor region the default location for the majority of new public bodies as well as the relocation of existing jobs currently located in the capital.

In addition, we will withdraw the flawed National Development Framework and issue a revised national development plan based on our new spatial planning map. In addition to the Arfor and the Cymoedd regions, this has regions for the north-east, central Wales, for Swansea Bay, and for south-east Wales, the Cardiff City Region. Delivery for these regions will be the responsibility of Prosperity Wales. No part of Wales will be left out.

Our Plan for the Valleys

The Valleys – from the Amman Valley in the west, to Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen in the east – present many of our country's greatest economic and social challenges.

Building the Nation

A Plaid Cymru Government will establish Cymoedd, a Valleys Development Authority, with a remit to drive the economic opportunities associated with the Valleys Metro, in particular the Valleys CrossRail. Cymoedd will work closely with Transport for Wales to ensure the delivery of CrossRail. Transport for Wales will be responsible for constructing the Valleys Metro and delivering the rolling stock, while the Development Authority will be responsible for the provision of transit-oriented development along its length.

To encourage active travel in the graded terrain of the Valleys we will establish an electric bike manufacturer in the heart of the Valleys. Bikes will be mounted at every train station to guarantee seamless travel.

Cymoedd will complement the Cardiff and Swansea Bay City Deals, not replace them. It will work closely with Prosperity Wales, the local authorities, housing associations, and the private sector to ensure that public procurement is as localised as possible, and to co-ordinate local business and investment.

Cymoedd will assemble a team to promote business development adjacent to Metro stations and interchanges and the main commuting corridors. It will also promote community-driven renewable energy and other projects, as set out in the Greenprint for the Valleys, authored by Rhondda's Member of the Senedd, Leanne Wood.

The Authority will identify three centres across the central Valleys to become anchor towns, linked by the Metro CrossRail. Merthyr will be made the key development focus for the Heads of the Valleys corridor. To pump-prime this role the Development Authority will actively support the proposed National Centre for Industrial Heritage at Cyfarthfa Castle, with its 190-acre park along both sides of the River Taff in Merthyr.

We will commission a feasibility study on the creation of a new town along the Heads of the Valleys corridor.

In addition, Cymoedd will identify and promote a number of other flagship attractions relating to the arts and heritage, capable of achieving an international profile in other locations across the Valleys. As part of our commitment to 'more than a million' Welsh speakers, the Authority will also prioritise the creation of new Welsh language spaces in order to increase the use of Welsh in the Valleys.

The Authority will also be charged with developing the Valleys Regional Park. This will be important in projecting the environmental and heritage assets of the Valleys, not just to provide greater recreation opportunities, but for creating a more attractive environment for business investment, and for tourism.

Valleys CrossRail

Cardiff City Council have published plans for a £1bn plus transport strategy that includes a Cardiff CrossRail from St Mellons to Llantrisant, plus a Circle Line with a rail bridge over the Taff. This will undoubtedly improve public transport connectivity in Cardiff. Now we need an equally exciting vision for the Valleys.

We need a more focused investment in the Metro north of Cardiff that will deliver the step-change in regeneration that the Valleys need. Using existing, new and reinstated lines, a Valleys CrossRail will connect Treherbert in the Rhondda to Pontypool, via Pontypridd, Nelson, Ystrad Mynach, Hengoed, Blackwood, Newbridge, and Crumlin.

The Valleys CrossRail will be as much about business development, urban regeneration and housing as transport. Overall, the scheme will directly benefit a population of more than 250,000 people, resulting in a greater and more equitable spread of economic activity.

Building the Nation

Our Plan for Arfor

Plaid Cymru's Arfor strategy entails the creation of three new eco-centres as extensions of existing settlements – on the Menai Strait between Bangor and Caernarfon, at Aberystwyth and at Carmarthen. They will be vibrant employment, leisure, cultural and entertainment hubs serving their rural hinterlands and connected by a western coast rail link between Bangor and Carmarthen.

The Arfor Development Agency will have powers in relation to these locations in respect of land acquisition, together with the funding to provide the necessary infrastructure, housing, and other economic incentives. The Agency will operate within a local democratic planning structure set by the local authorities.

Arfor's eco-centres will be focal points for social and work interactions with their wider rural hinterlands. They will be hubs for the creation of new, high quality jobs in innovation and health sciences linked to their universities and local hospitals, in the environmental and creative industries, and in social enterprises. Supporting a vibrant Welsh language cultural scene, they will be a regional focus for a youthful urban experience which is vital for the future of the Welsh language. They will:

1. Create new jobs in construction, maintenance, and management of affordable social housing, with many training opportunities.
2. Be carbon neutral, exemplars for sustainable development, with their energy needs supplied by renewables.
3. Be connected by rail, with completion of the missing rail links between Carmarthen and Aberystwyth, and Pwllheli and Bangor.

In addition, the Arfor Development Agency will:

- Collaborate with the Bangor, Aberystwyth and Trinity St David's Universities to generate research-led spin-off enterprises.

- Co-operate with the Region's three District General Hospitals to develop related Life Sciences and Healthcare projects.
- Lead on the use of public procurement as an instrument of economic development.
- Develop a skills and labour-market strategy designed to encourage Arfor residents, especially the young, to perceive the region as an entity which provides a wide range of progressive career opportunities.
- Promote localised and community-owned renewable energy schemes.
- Support Welsh-speakers in setting up and developing business enterprises, including co-operative and social enterprises, and encouraging them to run those businesses through the medium of Welsh.
- Support the nation-wide 'more than a million' speakers commitment, by making Welsh the language of internal administration of the public sector and the public sponsored organisations across the region, and promoting new private and voluntary spaces where the language is the norm.
- Create sector specific strategies, in particular for agri-food, hospitality, and tourism. The latter should entail the founding of a Food Institute and a Tourism Academy, linked to one of the Universities, with a working hotel teaching hospitality through the medium of Welsh.

Based in Machynlleth, near the centre of the region, Arfor's Board will include representatives from the local authorities within the region, the universities and the environmental, social enterprise, and farming sectors. It will be gender balanced and proactively improve the representation of other underrepresented groups.

Arfor's western rail corridor

Working in partnership with Transport for Wales, a major objective for the Arfor Development Agency will be completing the rail link between Bangor and Carmarthen.

Building the Nation

The first step will be reinstating the link between Carmarthen and Aberystwyth. Providing passenger rail services for most of the western coast, it will deliver a broad range of economic, environmental social and cultural benefits, providing essential connectivity for the Arfor region. It will strengthen the long-term sustainability of communities, businesses, and public institutions, for example the universities in Lampeter and Aberystwyth.

All-Wales Development

A Plaid Cymru Government will not leave any region of Wales behind. Prosperity Wales, our new all-Wales economic development agency, will be charged with overseeing development strategies for Clwyd, Powys, Swansea Bay and the South-East.

Considerations for the development of these regions include:

Clwyd

- Its core economic role and identity is manufacturing, moving into green technology. It should become seen as a 'Workshop of Wales', with key anchor firms such as Airbus.
- Wrexham will become the financial capital of Wales, plus developing as a film and television cultural hub, linking Glyndwr University, Creative Wales, the British Film Commission, and the county council.
- Just like their counterparts in Arfor, towns like Wrexham, Ruthin, Denbigh and Corwen will be promoted as centres of the Welsh language cultural scene, with a regional focus for a youthful urban experience which is vital for the future of the Welsh language.
- Developing Mostyn as a deep-water port specialising in offshore energy and tidal lagoon maintenance in the Dee Estuary and Colwyn Bay.

Powys

- It should develop niche industries related to its strong farming culture, adding value with new local processing facilities in Llanidloes and Brecon. We will support the creation of a Welsh Wool Research Centre in Newtown to add value through technology and information transfer in the development of new enterprises.
- Encourage a stronger hospitality and tourism offer linked to Welsh heritage and walking (long distance pathways).
- Its central location makes it a key meeting point for conferences and events. We will develop a new conference facility at a suitable location in Llandrindod or Builth.

Swansea Bay

- Wales' city for academic and business collaboration, Swansea should build on its record of high-tech University spin-outs – for example Solar Research and Energy Active Buildings and a Welsh Centre for Specialist Medicines. An academic/industry research team should be established at Llandarcy to find new uses for waste oil and plastic products.
- Swansea Bay should become a centre for development of Wales' renewable energy technology – Plaid commits to the Swansea Tidal Lagoon and an associated initiative to create a Welsh Sea Life Centre.
- Develop Swansea Bay Metro proposals, reopening old railway lines and stations - including Cockett, Landore and the Swansea District Line – and creating direct routes to the surrounding Swansea and Amman Valleys.

Building the Nation

South-East

- Cardiff should continue to attract and support enterprises that will not locate outside a large city environment. At the same time, it needs to develop a more specialist base around collaborative innovation, especially in the arts, and scientific research, especially in life sciences.
- Monmouthshire should build on its reputation as the food capital of Wales and as an attractive location for high growth digital business.
- Newport should focus on developing our maritime energy potential - with tidal lagoons, offshore wind, and wave power to create a Green Jobs revolution.

New Community Governance

Plaid Cymru's six strategic planning regions will provide the framework for an evolutionary approach to creating new democratic leadership at the community level across Wales.

The present 22 unitary authorities, which have proved so effective during the Covid pandemic, will be retained. Alongside them we will create a new system of empowered Community and Town Councils, as the foundation for Welsh local government.

We will reduce the number of Community and Town Councils to a more effective scale of around 150, a number that corresponds in some respects to the 164 urban and rural district councils that existed prior to the 1974 reorganisation of local government, and in others to the catchment areas of secondary schools.

The new Community and Town Councils will also have planning powers and an economic development role in promoting local business startups, social enterprises and co-operatives, tourism, small-scale renewable energy schemes, and recycling. They will become a delivery vehicle for regeneration strategies set by Cymoedd, our Valleys Development Authority, the Arfor Development Agency, and elsewhere by Prosperity Wales, our new national economic development agency.



TACKLING THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Summary

- Set a Wales 2035 Mission to decarbonise and to reach net zero emissions.
- Establish Ynni Cymru as an energy development company with a target of generating 100 per cent of electricity within Wales from renewables by 2035.
- Introduce a Nature Act with statutory targets to restore biodiversity by 2050.
- Provide good quality and safe green space within a five- minute walk of all Welsh households.
- Ban non-essential single-use plastics in 2021, ensure zero waste ends up in landfill and end all waste incineration by 2030.
- Increase the level of investment in flood mitigation to £500m over the course of this Senedd term.

Tackling the Climate Emergency

Facing up to the Climate and Nature Emergency

Facing up to the Climate and Nature Emergency is the challenge of our time, and is what we will be most judged upon by future generations. Unless governments across the world step up, freak weather events will become commonplace, drastic changes to our climate will affect the most disadvantaged, and our natural world will suffer irreparable harm. Plaid Cymru are ready to face this challenge as a government.

To be serious about climate change we must tackle it across multiple areas, embedding it at the heart of decision-making at all levels of government. Addressing our harmful impact on the planet will be the collective responsibility of the whole government, guided by the Minister for the Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs who will have overall direct responsibility.

We will ensure that all departmental budgets within Government are aligned with nature and climate restoration. This way, all Ministers are investing and embedding nature in decisions which will ultimately deliver for everybody - from health through to local government planning decisions. Our government will also review the entire budget to ensure that the resource allocated to decarbonising and restoring nature matches the urgent need, and is reflective of our ambition.

We will require local authorities to reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions (carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide) within their area through setting local GHG budgets. Local government pension schemes should divest from fossil fuels, and collaborate with the Welsh Pension Partnership to identify suitable reinvestment opportunities.

We will create, under the umbrella of the Development Bank and in conjunction with the National Infrastructure Commission, a new Welsh National Infrastructure Bank. This will finance renewable energy generation and storage for public buildings, homes and workplaces. It will offer credit for local energy coops and utilities so that as much as possible of this new infrastructure can be democratically owned at the local level.

Wales 2035

The current target for Wales of Net Zero carbon emissions by 2050 is not fast enough. Plaid Cymru will amend Wales' emissions reduction pathway this year. We will set a target to meet all of Wales' energy demands – electricity, heating and transport – entirely from renewables by 2035. We will also set a target for Wales to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2035.

Achieving independence in the coming decade will give us essential policy levers in reaching this goal. However, if by the end of the decade Wales is still reliant on key policy decisions being made at Westminster, we may be forced to adjust the target date.

Wales 2035 will become a national, cross-sector and cross-community mission with the following plans:

- Decarbonising all of our railways by 2035.
- Legislating to ban sales of new petrol and diesel cars and vans before the UK date of 2030.
- All electricity demand in Wales to be renewable by 2030.
- All electricity generated in Wales to be renewable by 2035.

Inspired by the City Council's target for Cardiff to become carbon neutral by 2025, we will launch a Challenge Fund for cities, towns

Tackling the Climate Emergency

and communities that seek to become Welsh carbon pioneers by reaching carbon neutrality before 2035.

Greener Homes

We will ensure that all homes, offices and public buildings have the highest level of energy efficiency by 2050.

New Build

We will plan houses in a way which will accommodate seamless transfer to new technologies. We will pursue the roll-out of energy positive houses which are capable of exporting surplus energy to the electricity grid.

In planning new homes, we will ban the use of fossil fuel energy from 2022 and will require all to be highly energy efficient by 2023.

Retrofit

We will create a long term energy efficiency infrastructure plan to retrofit the entire Welsh housing stock to higher environmental standards over the next 30 years. This will contribute to ending fuel poverty and the associated 'excess deaths' in winter.

To meet our target of retrofitting every home by 2050 we will need to refurbish 200,000 homes in this Senedd term. This programme will deliver 20 per cent efficiency savings across the Welsh domestic stock.

Heating by electricity and heat pumps will be our priority and we will therefore develop a major programme of installing heat pumps, prioritising off-grid homes.

Every home will be offered a free energy audit and recommendations on a conversion plan.

Energy

With governmental will and ambition we can ensure that Wales meets all its energy demand entirely from renewables by 2035. Our target will be to build 11GW of installed capacity by that year.

Energy Atlas and Ynni Cymru

We will begin by commissioning a national inventory of green energy potential in Wales, an 'Energy Atlas for Wales', which will evolve into a detailed Energy Plan for the phased utilisation of natural resources and the development of indigenous firms and community energy projects.

This will include using the tidal range off our southern and northern coasts and mapping green hydrogen potential in Wales. We will support the development of tidal lagoons. All renewable energy developments will be done in a way that minimises any potential harm to biodiversity by developing improved locational guidance to developers in both marine and terrestrial environments.

We will establish Ynni Cymru as an energy project development company, similarly to Transport for Wales and the Development Bank for Wales. Ynni Cymru will allow Wales to join the European norm of establishing a state-backed energy company.

Ynni Cymru, located in Ynys Môn, will help facilitate peer-to-peer trading of electricity between microgrids and virtual energy islands.

Generation and Use

We will change the existing target for Wales electricity demand to be powered by renewables from 70 per cent to 100 per cent by 2030 and set a new target that 100 per cent of electricity generation within Wales will be renewable by 2035.

Tackling the Climate Emergency

We will:

- Advance our wave and tidal technologies to fully realise our coastal potential.
- Aim for a substantial increase in wind generation, particularly offshore. We will support the expansion of solar farms in Wales, and PV roofs.
- Invest in decarbonisation research, particularly for key industrial sectors such as steel, and position ourselves as a world leader in emerging Welsh strengths such as hydrogen and marine energy.
- Massively expand Welsh electricity storage where Wales already enjoys a strong position through its two pumped hydro plants.
- Require all new renewable energy projects in Wales above 5MW to have at least between 5 per cent and 33 per cent community and local ownership, to support rural and coastal economies.
- Support localised community renewable energy schemes, especially hydropower.
- Task the National Infrastructure Commission to devise a plan to future proof Wales' electricity grids.

Nature and the Environment

We commit to leaving the natural environment in a better state, building towards the recovery of all possible habitats.

We will introduce a Nature Act to set a statutory duty and targets to restore biodiversity in both terrestrial and marine environments.

A long term National Nature Plan will set out a national natural capital balance sheet, with

proposed capital gains and maintenance with spending and an independent auditing process clearly identified. We will invest in protecting and developing an extensive network of wildlife sites with a particular focus on improving existing protected sites.

We will increase the environmental enforcement budget of Natural Resources Wales. We will ensure fines are of sufficient scale to be a greater deterrent to pollution. We will use new advances in digital technology to measure deforestation, habitat loss, genetic and biological diversity, the quality of soil, and the cleanliness of river and ocean water regularly and accurately. This will help us monitor progress and improve the effectiveness of enforcement.

Our Nature Act will also close the environmental governance gap created by our departure from the EU, by establishing an independent environmental governance body for Wales.

We will invest in developing an extensive network of wildlife sites with a particular focus on improving existing protected sites.

In addition, ensuring the provision of good quality green space within a five-minute walk of all Welsh households will be a government priority. We will use the planning system to make natural green spaces available in people's communities as a basic right, which is necessary for our physical and mental health as well as for nature's recovery.

We will improve and extend Wales' marine protected areas and we will investigate the creation of a National Park of the Sea in Cardigan Bay and the Celtic Sea. Our approach will involve all stakeholders and be mindful of the sustainability of our Welsh fishing industry.

Tackling the Climate Emergency

As a priority, in our first year in Government we will introduce a Clean Air Act for Wales to protect, in law, the health of our citizens and our ecosystems from pollutants in our atmosphere.

Funding to Natural Resources Wales and our National Parks will reflect the key role they have to play in tackling our climate and biodiversity crisis.

Forestry

Reforestation of Wales will become a national goal. We will develop and implement an action plan to deliver a minimum of 20 per cent tree cover in all urban areas. This will include strengthening regulatory oversight to protect green space. Tree felling will require a special license and the planting of additional trees in return.

Our forest creation target involves planting a 100,000 hectares of mixed woodland per decade in Wales, resulting in a total increase of 300,000 hectares by 2050.

We will ensure better active management of new and existing woodlands to improve habitat for wildlife and plant life, and ensure we plant a diverse selection of trees to protect against new diseases and pests with a 'right tree in right place' approach for forest restoration.

The 'hedges and edges' approach will play a key part in helping achieve our targets and we will work with farmers and land managers, as part of their agri-environment role, to extend hedges, shelterbelts, stream side and field edge habitats.

Our forestry ambitions will extend into Welsh seas, with kelp forests and seagrass meadows contributing to our biodiversity and carbon reduction targets.

We will make Wales a deforestation-free nation by working with the UK Government to legislate to end the importation of goods that have caused deforestation. We will

also introduce deforestation-free targets in procurement policy in Wales as part of our transition to utilising locally-produced and sustainable goods.

Waste and Plastic

By 2030, zero waste will go to landfill and we will end all waste incineration. Any products that cannot be reused, repaired, refilled, recirculated or recycled will be designed out of the system. We will tackle the issue of plastic waste by immediately banning non-essential single-use plastics in 2021, including plastic bags, straws, cutlery, Styrofoam and non-biodegradable wet-wipes.

As a stepping stone we will increase the statutory target for recycling of municipal waste to 80 per cent by 2026, adding more materials to the list of those that can be recycled, and setting new ambitious targets for commercial and industrial waste. We will introduce binding targets to halve food waste from farm to fork by 2030.

Recycling targets will be incentivised through a challenge fund for zero waste communities for towns, cities, villages and valleys that want to be pioneers in the journey to a circular economy.

We will legislate to make companies that produce packaging financially responsible for their environmental impact and create a Deposit Return Scheme for bottles and cans. To prevent waste we will introduce a levy on all single-use cups filled at the point of sale, payable by the consumer, in order to encourage the uptake of reusable alternatives.

Flooding and Rivers

We will place a greater emphasis on flood prevention in planning guidelines, recognising that climate change will make serious flooding events more likely in future.

Tackling the Climate Emergency

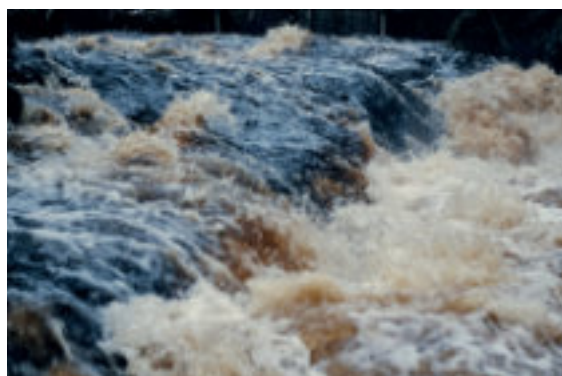
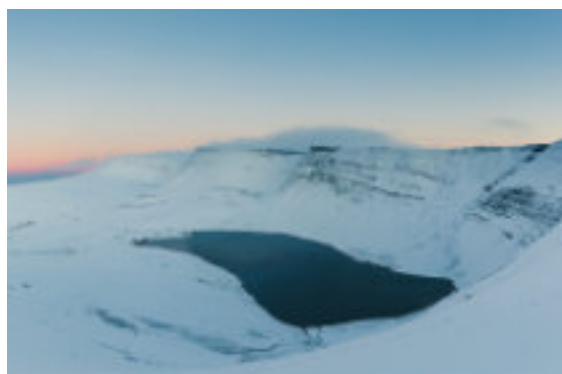
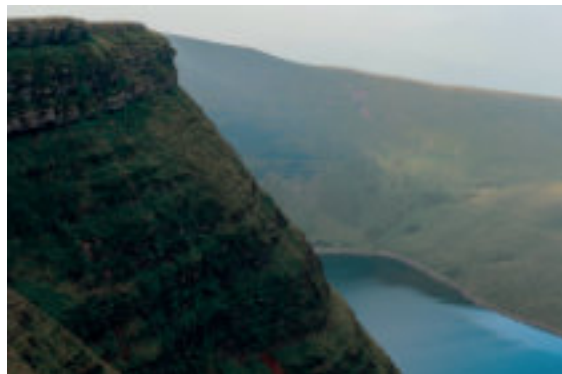
We will:

- Deliver a nationwide standard of resilience to flooding with an annual likelihood of 0.5 per cent by 2050. We will ask the National Infrastructure Commission for Wales to present its assessment of the investment needed to achieve this target.
- Commit to increasing the level of investment in flood management, including natural flood management, to £500m over the course of this Senedd term.
- Amend planning regulations to ensure that from 2022 all new development is resilient to flooding with an annual likelihood of 0.5 per cent for its lifetime and does not increase risk elsewhere.
- Ask Local Lead Flood Authorities to present updated plans for their respective areas by September 2021.

We will ensure that responsibility for flood management by relevant authorities is clearly delineated. We will work with local authorities to identify those neighbourhoods that are at high risk of flooding as well as having a high proportion of vulnerable residents. We will prioritise working with these communities to develop and fund community climate adaptation and prevention plans, including nature-based solutions.

Operating through Natural Resources Wales we will create a network of river system operators, responsible for each river catchment, preventing pollution, and coordinating investment in alternative natural flood management.

We commit to holding a public inquiry into learning the lessons from the extensive flooding that occurred in 2020 across Wales and to act on its recommendations.





CARING FOR THE PEOPLE OF WALES

Summary

- Build a National Health and Care Service where personal care is free at the point of need.
- Make health equality our goal in Government, with an emphasis on preventative measures that improve mental health and encourage physical activity.
- Introduce a Clean Air Act and examine the case for a Junk Food Tax.
- Provide 6,000 extra healthcare professionals for Wales - 4,000 nurses, 1000 doctors and 1000 allied health professionals.
- Plan for the recovery of health and social care services from Covid-19 to: (i) Treat patients most in need, especially those with Long Covid; (ii) Support staff in dealing with ongoing stress; and (iii) Prepare for possible future pandemics.
- Deliver new diagnostic centres for cancer and other conditions to ensure early treatment.



HOPE

Caring for the People of Wales

This past year has made us all value our health and care services as never before. We have seen for ourselves the selflessness of the staff who have gone the extra mile day after day after day to keep us safe, to save lives and to care for the most vulnerable.

But we have also witnessed the frailties and unsustainability of those services, the lack of investment that led to an overdependence on the goodwill and sheer dedication of the health and care workforce.

We owe it to them now to relieve the pressure, to repay them for their commitment in our hour of need, to give them the support they need to do what they are trained to do. To care.

We must seize this moment, not only to rebuild and catch up with the backlog, but to create a new sustainability, a new robustness, in a new and transformed National Health and Care Service.

A National Health and Care Service

One of the greatest achievements of the 20th Century was the creation of the National Health Service so that illness, accidents or disease should not produce the threat of financial debt.

Plaid Cymru believes that we need the same approach for all personal care. Whether because of age, disability, temporary illness or chronic conditions many of us will require help with daily living. Some of us might need a safe space to live in and be cared for on a permanent basis.

Our ambition is that personal care should be free at the point of need.

Although our services need more investment Wales can be very proud of the care services currently offered to people living at home and in residential care. For those of us currently

cared for by these services or with loved ones in this position, the dedication of the staff is no surprise but Covid-19 has opened the eyes of many to the hard work, innovation and challenges of providing home care support, nursing care in the community and quality of life for residents in care homes.

Our ambition is make sure that those working in caring are rewarded and recognised as they deserve and that they have the autonomy and funding to provide the high quality care services they can be proud of.

It is distressing for people to have to stay in hospital or suffer while services argue about whether care needs are ‘social’ or ‘health’ and who will pay for the care package. The current system is unacceptable and cannot be defended.

Why should a person with dementia who requires 24 hours personal care support in toileting, movement to prevent pressure ulcers, support with feeding and drinking be told their needs are not healthcare needs and NHS funding is not available?

To achieve our vision in the next five years, a Plaid Cymru Government will:

- Establish a Commission to explore ways we can source extra money to fund the creation of a seamless Health and Social Care Service, free at the point of need. The Commission will report within a year and consider Plaid Cymru’s preferred option of using general taxation. It will also consider a levy-based Social Care Fund on the lines suggested by economist Gerald Holtham.
- Task our new National Health and Care Service to establish national frameworks for the delivery of all aspects of health and care, and for seamless integration of delivery on a local level, bringing together local government and health boards in new Regional Care Partnerships.

Caring for the People of Wales

- Reform the care assessment process so it focuses on identifying personal care need, and is no longer based on arbitrary definitions of 'health' or 'social' care.
- Set out national expectations for the individual living contribution (or 'hotel' costs) required – and more importantly set national milestones for reducing and eliminating this aspect.
- Invest in the range and quality of care in the community by extending Section 25B of the Nurse Staffing Levels (Wales) Act 2016 to cover community nursing and increasing the number of district nurses and nurses with a community master's degree.
- Work with providers to ensure care workers pay, terms and conditions are brought progressively into line with those of NHS staff, starting with making a £10 minimum wage mandatory for any care provider in receipt of public funds and addressing sick pay.
- Raise the profile and status of nurses and nursing care in care homes by increasing nursing student placements in care homes alongside the development of career pathways to specialist and consultant posts in Older People's care, Infection Prevention and Control and dementia care.
- Encourage walking and cycling with a specific focus on access for disabled groups. There will be investment in better pavements, dropped curbs, public toilets and benches and improving public accessibility to amenities such as parks, and public transport of buses and railways. Planning regulations to support access will be strengthened.
- Invest in the Youth Service and Youth Centres in every area – ensuring they include professionals offering mental health advice and sexual health advice.
- Increase access to sexual health services, information, testing, and early treatment.
- Work with large public sector employers such as NHS and local government to ensure that staff have access to occupational health service, leisure and sport facilities – and we will work with business providers to see how this access can be expanded to employees of SMEs.
- Require all schools to meet the minimum requirement of providing children with the opportunity to do two hours of physical activity each week.
- Ensure post-16 education institutions provide sport and leisure facilities and encourage participation by attendees.

Equality in Public Health

Growth in life expectancy in Wales has stalled in recent years and health inequalities have widened. The impact of Covid-19 has already been shown to hit poorer communities hardest. Too many people in Wales are prevented from working, caring and enjoying life by poor physical and mental health.

A Plaid Cymru Government will make Health Equality our goal– with actions to improve access to care for all, expanding opportunities for physical activity. We will:

- Social prescribing – such as gardening, walking and swimming – will be encouraged and expanded to include participation in community activity.
- Encourage healthy eating by monitoring access to healthy food in the most deprived communities, ensuring cookery is on the curriculum, and explore the legislative options of a Junk Food Tax.
- Fluoridate the Welsh water supply to reduce cavities in children by 25 per cent.

Caring for the People of Wales

We will aim to end HIV transmission in Wales by 2026. We will:

- Increase access to sexual health services, information, testing, and early treatment.
- Fund access to pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP).
- Support education, research, and community groups tackling AIDS.

A Clean Air Act

We will introduce a Clean Air Act to establish clean air zones in towns and cities. This will:

- Create Clean Air Zones in pollution hotspots, with targeted action on transport, industry, and domestic solid fuel and wood burning, with Cardiff, Swansea, Wrexham and Newport covered as a matter of urgency.
- Give communities the right to place pollution-monitoring equipment outside schools and hospitals.
- Enable local authorities to introduce pollution charges.

Junk Food Tax

We will examine the public health case for a junk food tax, as introduced in other countries such as Mexico and Hungary. We know that food products containing high levels of sugar and salt are responsible for causing obesity and associated conditions such as diabetes and cardio-vascular disease. A tax on unhealthy food products would be likely to change behaviour and persuade manufacturers to improve their products, as has been the case with the sugary drinks tax.

Mental Health

Mental ill health may affect around a quarter of the population over any twelve month period. Yet just 11 per cent of the NHS budget is spent on mental health services. Only one in three people with mental health problems receive treatment –

and even for this fortunate minority there are long waits. We commit to increasing the resources allocated to mental and emotional health year on year over the course of the next five years.

We will establish a network of Youth Wellbeing Centres for mental and physical health support for young people who are not ill enough to require advanced psychiatric treatment, yet need help. We will base these Centres in towns across Wales with good transport links, aiming to make the service as accessible as possible. In addition, we will:

- Extend support offered to children and young people in care to 25 years of age.
- Provide Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and other talking therapies more widely.
- Include the rehabilitation and treatment of those with eating disorders in our mental health provision.
- Ensure that mental and emotional health becomes woven into the core of health practice to help limit hospital admissions.

Promoting positive mental health must be addressed as an essential part of public health. We will:

- Promote emotional resilience and good mental health in schools and post-16 education providers and youth centres.
- Invest in school nursing and Child and Adolescent Mental Health services.
- Ensure counselling is available in primary care and GPs have access to resources locally to direct people appropriately.
- Explore access to mental health services as part of occupational health services and seek ways to make this support available to all employers.
- Seek all opportunities to encourage community investment in sporting facilities over and above Government funding.

Caring for the People of Wales

Access to Care

Health inequalities are created and compounded when communities cannot access care services. We need to think carefully and creatively about how we shape our services to suit the needs of the population rather than simply expecting people to make the effort to suit the service and blaming them when they cannot.

Public transport is an obvious example of this – if the hospital is not served by a bus route how can those without a car travel to it? Centralising health services without planning for this need is unacceptable.

Online Access to services is increasingly important. Many have already benefited from being able to have a consultation with their GP on the phone or renew their prescription online. However, we need to make sure all communities have access to this type of technology and the skills to use it and no-one is left behind.

We will create a digital innovation fund to create digital therapeutic apps across the main health conditions, making the National Health and Care Service easily and widely accessible on smartphones by 2025.

Other important areas which need consideration are how to make our care services more accessible to disabled communities such as those with hearing or visual impairments. Groups such as the learning disabled also need support in accessing services, while communities such as LGBTQ+ report disturbing experiences of misunderstandings and prejudice.

Six Thousand Extra Healthcare Professionals for Wales

A Plaid Cymru Government will have a five-year plan to recruit and educate an additional 4,000 nurses, 1000 doctors, and 1000 allied healthcare professionals such as physiotherapists and occupational therapists. Our workforce strategies will look to educate healthcare students in a way that provides the consultants and specialists we will need in twenty years. This approach to education will benefit service development and attract the brightest and best students.

Over the next five years we will hold roadshows throughout Wales serving the dual purpose of promoting healthier lifestyles and promoting care careers. This will include going into schools and engaging with pupils.

We will:

- Improve access to primary care by exploring incentives for GPs to practice in areas experiencing shortages. We will create more salaried GP posts and advanced nurse practitioners for areas that cannot attract the more traditional GP practice models.
- Improve the quality of care by ensuring health and social care staff have access to Continuing Professional Development.
- Establish an NHS Nursing Retention Strategy to halt the damaging and costly exodus of nursing staff.
- Improve the ability of people including vulnerable groups such as people with dementia and young children to access care in Welsh. We will achieve this by increasing the number of Welsh-speaking health and social professionals and provide additional support to those already in our workforce to enable them to use the Welsh language professionally.

Caring for the People of Wales

Recovery and Rebuilding from Covid-19

Amidst the suffering and disruption caused to our daily life by Covid-19, the strength and struggles faced by those in our care services have been truly astonishing to watch. In an already demanding role our staff have gone further than ever before risking their own lives to care for those who needed it. We need to understand the scale of trauma and exhaustion our staff are facing and plan our services in the next few years accordingly.

Although the nature of the pandemic was truly unpredictable in the early stages it is nevertheless very clear that supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) could have been better prepared. We need to learn the lessons of this pandemic so the next generation is better prepared to face any similar difficulties.

Routine healthcare services have been disrupted as vast numbers of staff were moved to support intensive care and care homes and then to ensure the swift vaccination roll-out. Waiting lists and unmet need will sadly have built up to a scale not seen for over a decade and we will need to plan for this accordingly.

A Plaid Cymru Government will:

- Ensure we have ‘pandemic preparedness’ in terms of appropriate PPE stockpiling and sourcing arrangements along with communication protocols and other measures deemed necessary by healthcare professionals.
- Increase the number of specialist Infection Prevention and Control Nurses and ensure this advice and support extends to cover care homes and community care services.
- Ensure health and social staff have access to the counselling and other support services they need.

- Plan our recovery of routine care services sensibly and sustainably.
- Ensure NHS Wales has both resources it needs and the effective scrutiny required to ensure effective statistical reporting, vaccination and testing and trace programmes for the future.
- Hold a Wales-specific inquiry to ensure we learn any lessons from the Welsh pandemic response.

Specialist Care Services

There are many areas of specialist care in Wales that have been neglected and will require specific strategic plans for investment. Examples of this include neonatal care where for too long health boards have had to choose between overworking current staff or amalgamating services. Another example is end of life care services where investment is needed in hospice and end of life community care. “Long Covid” is currently emerging as a condition that will require national attention to ensure the right services are in place for those suffering.

A Plaid Cymru Government will make sure that all of these areas receive strategic attention and there is a clear national line of accountability to the improvement of services across Wales.

Cancer

We will introduce a new cancer plan for Wales. The Covid-19 pandemic has led to the postponement of diagnostic and screening programmes and there is a risk that we will be diagnosing many cancers at a later stage than otherwise would have been the case.

We will prioritise the continued roll out of multidisciplinary diagnostic centres across Wales, making access to diagnostic tests easier for patients and GPs.

Caring for the People of Wales

Where the clinical evidence supports it, we will expand screening programmes and ensure they are well promoted. We will use mobile screening units to take the service to the hardest to reach communities and ensure fast turnaround of results to enable cancer to be diagnosed earlier.

Upon diagnosis, we will ensure earlier treatment, establishing more ambitious targets from diagnosis to treatment based on clinical evidence about the appropriate time length.

For patients who receive a late diagnosis, we will endeavour to give options to participate in clinical trials to access promising new treatments. We will also ensure priority access to private sector technology such as the proton beam therapy centre in Newport.

Dentistry

Many people have missed routine and preventative services during the coronavirus crisis. With many rural areas also losing their NHS dentists, there will be a crisis in the nation's oral health that requires immediate action. Accordingly, we will:

- Launch a recruitment campaign to attract dentists back to NHS work, and renegotiate the contracts to make such work more financially attractive.
- Build on the decision to establish a Training Unit for the North at Bangor University to make it a centre of excellence for dentistry training for the whole of Wales.
- Restore mobile dentist units for rural Wales, bringing dentist services to communities that have had trouble accessing them in the past.

- Conduct a review of dental charges imposed on patients, establishing the extent to which this acts as a barrier for accessing treatment, and consider a range of options to replace these charges to encourage people to visit the dentist to prevent tooth decay further down the line.

Better Governance and Patient and Carer Rights

We will introduce a Right to Care Charter, which will establish national expectations on waiting times for treatment, and our long standing pledge to have essential services such as maternity and A+E within a reasonable distance of people's homes.

We will reform the governance and regulation of health bodies in Wales to place greater emphasis on openness, public trust and engagement, patient outcomes and public value. There should be more openness and transparency in the publication of health data and information, which should be made more easily accessible to the public. Patients and families should be entitled to sit in on internal review committees.

Patient advocates are needed to help patients and carers to navigate and hold the NHS and other public services such as social security, education, local authorities, and housing providers to account.

Caring for the People of Wales

We will establish a regulatory body for NHS management, which will be responsible for setting competencies and professional development for NHS managers, as well as having the ability to sanction poor performance.

Health and Social Care in a Digital Age

The Welsh health sector has failed to harness the full potential for digital technology. We will set ourselves the goal of Wales being a leader in the next wave of the digitalisation of healthcare.

We will create a digital innovation fund to create digital therapeutic apps across the main health conditions, to put the National Health and Care Service in everyone's reach by 2025.

We will invest in new digital technology to ensure that IT systems are compatible and everyone in Wales can book a GP appointment online.

New Health Boards for the north

The North Wales Health Board was in Special Measures for more than five years. It is too large, employs too many management consultants and agency staff, and has poor relationships with the unions. We will replace it with two new Boards.

One for the North West, centred around Bangor University Medical School, will aim to be a world leader in rural medicine. The other, for the North East, will focus on elective treatment, establish a centre for nursing excellence in partnership with Glyndŵr University, and develop specialist services that too often have been outsourced to England.



EDUCATION



Summary

- Provide free school meals for all children in families receiving Universal Credit, extending to all primary school children by the end of our first term.
- Establish world-class early years education and childcare, offering 30 hours a week, free for all children from 24 months to school age.
- Employ 4,500 extra teachers and specialist support staff in schools across Wales by the end of our first term.
- Conduct a Ministerial review of post-16 provision, put in place systems to end needless competition in post-16 education, and place vocational education on the same foundations as academic learning in school and university.
- Reduce the maximum tuition fee chargeable to Welsh-domiciled students at Welsh universities to £7,500.
- Provide a lifelong learning entitlement for retraining worth £5,000 for everyone over 25.

Education

Free School Meals

We aim to provide all primary and secondary children with free school meals, with an emphasis on developing local supply chains, supporting local farmers and local businesses.

As a first phase of introducing this policy, a Plaid Cymru Government will raise the eligibility threshold so that children in every household in receipt of Universal Credit receives free school meals. We will then set a timetable to extend free school meal provision to every pupil, beginning with universal free school meals for infants, then all primary school children by the end of our first term.

Food and its production will be embedded in the life of our schools. With contracts procured locally wherever possible so that children will learn where their food comes from and develop the habit of eating nutritious, locally produced food early in life, meaning they will be healthier, with benefits for economy and the environment.

Early Years

We will establish a national free, Welsh-medium early years education and childcare service, *Meithrin Cymru*, giving high quality provision for children aged 12 months until they are eligible for full time education.

This will be a phased-in policy over two Government terms, much of it to be implemented within the first term. As a first step 30 hours of childcare a week will be available to children regardless of their family's work status. By the end of the Government's first term the offer will have been extended to 30 hours of childcare a week to every child 2 years old and above.

We will invest in the childcare workforce, including increasing the number of degree-qualified nursery teachers. Our aim is to move towards giving Qualified Teacher Status for as many as possible in the sector, with the increase in pay, conditions, and status this would entail. We will create a dedicated funding pot to achieve this.

We will use this first stage of development to ensure that all children can learn through the medium of Welsh by the time they start school. By working with childcare providers, such as *Mudiad Meithrin*, we will aim for Welsh language childcare being available in all parts of Wales. These plans will be supported by further workforce planning, targets and reforms in a Welsh Language Education Act.

We will offer free Welsh language learning opportunities to nursery teachers in the English-medium sector so they can take advantage of new Welsh-medium work opportunities.

Schools

Funding

Plaid Cymru will invest more in our schools to employ more staff. By the end of our first term in office we will:

- Recruit and retain 4,500 extra teachers and specialist support staff.
- Employ additional Learning Needs coordinators.
- Increase professional learning opportunities.

We will deliver a three-year budget for education so that schools and further education settings can better plan and utilise their resources. We will make sure funding reaches the frontline in an effective and timely manner, moving away from specific grants, and last-minute allocations. The extra funding we have allocated will allow schools more capacity for curriculum development and special projects.

We will bear down on unnecessary administration and bureaucracy. We will produce a more effective use of resources. We will streamline the so-called 'middle tier' between schools and Welsh Government, including local authorities, education consortia, universities, Estyn, WJEC, and Qualifications Wales.

Education

Family Schools

We believe that schools should offer holistic, multi-agency services to families, starting with Early Years. We will develop agreed criteria for defining the characteristics of family schools and build them into school strategic plans.

Our parenting policies will build on the latest research evidence to help parents provide the best possible early start for their children. We commit to trialling and evaluating innovative programmes and roll out best practice at pace.

The teaching profession

Currently one in three teachers is quitting the classroom within his or her first five years. We will address this by valuing the profession, creating better working conditions and opportunities.

We will raise the starting salary of teachers in Wales by 10 per cent to £30,000 from 2022 and provide in-career sabbatical breaks for teachers.

We commit to making teaching a Masters' level profession, beginning with a requirement for all newly qualified teachers to be working towards a government-funded master's degree in education or a subject relevant to their classroom work within five years. We will also encourage practising teachers to obtain the qualification through part-time study

In addition, we will:

- Improve the teacher-student ratio, to enable more group and one-to-one tuition.
- Develop career pathways including mentorship schemes and reform of incentive schemes.
- Appoint more non-teaching staff to deal with pupil needs beyond education.

- Simplify the supply teacher structure by reverting to a system run by Local Education Authorities. All education workers, full-time and supply teachers alike, should have access to continual professional development throughout their careers.
- Conduct a review of Initial Teacher Education and Continuing Professional Development to ascertain their relevance to the demands of the new curriculum.

Teaching assistants and support staff have a critical part to play in making schools organisers of experience beyond the school boundaries. We will develop this as part of a more attractive and formalised role for teaching assistants who currently do not have a clear career pathway.

Digital Competence

We believe every child should be equipped with all that they need for learning from home, including a laptop and adequate wi-fi provision. We will introduce a 'digital entitlement' for all learners, committing to ensure provision of digital devices and high-speed internet access for every pupil.

We will implement a major new collaborative programme on digital skills bringing together education, employers and Government. At its heart will be a national collective effort to ensure that more people (particularly the young) are choosing to engage in technical and digital education programmes to match society and the economy's demand for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) skills and competencies. We will set a target of producing 5,000 additional technology graduates a year, with a strong emphasis on increasing the number of women graduates, black and ethnic minorities, and other underrepresented groups.

Education

We will review the role of specialist education and training academies, such as the National Software Academy and Institute of Coding, to assess if they are adequately prepared to meet current demand and the potential future expansion we require. We will assess whether specialist academies can work more closely with schools, Further and Higher Education, and work-based learning institutions in mainstreaming specialist digital training. This will also help to reduce the digital divide, in terms of gender, age and social class differences, in the context of the current digital workforce.

Closing the attainment gap

Individualised tutoring or coaching can be a gamechanger – but one that few families currently can afford. Students who receive one-to-one tuition tend to outperform their peers in a traditional classroom. We will introduce a national in-school system of one-to-one and small group tutoring, with all students entitled to a flexible system of in-school tutoring.

The attainment gap grows over the summer months when children are not in school. We will build on voluntary summer programmes designed to bridge the gap.

Though less common in Wales than in the other countries in the UK, private education contributes to educational inequality. We will abolish rates relief for private schools following the recommendations of the Barclay Review in Scotland.

Schools in disadvantaged communities will be resourced to recruit and retain well-qualified and experienced teachers. We will design education career paths for teachers conditional on time being spent in schools with higher levels of deprivation.

We will widen the scope for parental engagement in pupil learning. We will pilot a

‘para-teacher’ type role in the classroom to draw in a broader range of people to share their skills and experiences. We will create mentoring and coaching roles in schools for retired people.

Curriculum

The development of the new curriculum presents exciting opportunities to transform our education system. It has potential to promote creativity, collaboration, and innovation. Plaid Cymru will ensure that teachers have the time and resources they need to prepare and access professional development to implement the curriculum effectively.

We endorse the role of the new curriculum in fostering greater understanding of mental health and well-being, physical education as a core element, as well as lessons on healthy relationships, citizenship, children’s rights, Welsh identity, and tackling gender stereotypes. The history and stories of Wales in all their diversity, including the histories of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic People, will become a mandatory part of the curriculum, enshrined in law. We will ensure that teachers have the necessary resource materials.

Through our national Gorwelion programme we will invest in learning outside the classroom. This should include adventure learning and extracurricular activities of all kinds, including study visits and school trips, sport, music, and drama.

Qualifications and Assessment

We believe it is time to explore putting greater emphasis on continuous assessment rather than examinations.

Following consultation with universities and employers, we will phase out GCSEs, A Levels and BTEC. We aim to replace them with a Welsh version of the International

Education

Baccalaureate. This will be cross-disciplinary, portfolio-based, high quality, dynamic and digital. The new Welsh Baccalaureate will shift away from the strategy of pushing an ever-greater number of students through a narrow academic route and give equal status to the more vocational or technical education that many of the jobs of the future will require.

We will build an education system that involves real world experience, internships, and community projects of various kinds. This could involve sending students to other parts of the country, or even other countries to get to know other cultures and complete service projects with members of the host community.

21st Century school design

We will establish a Commission to examine ways schools can become more family-friendly and conducive to learning. This will include assessing the benefits of re-configuring the traditional three term year to make it more in tune with modern-day needs. It will also examine giving more flexibility to schools in the structure of the school day.

The Commission will also examine school designs and environments to make them more creative, personal, warmer, and welcoming. It will promote good ventilation, improved air quality, and a prioritisation of natural daylight, all of which significantly affect performance. It will also encourage varying class sizes with the aim of increasing collaborative work.

Post-16 Education

For too long we have been fixed upon giving young people binary choices at the age of 16: sixth form or college, workplace, or university.

We will replace the existing school leaving age of 16 with a new 'skills participation age' of 18. This means that the whole cohort will either be in education, or a job with training. We will work with employers and FE colleges

to ensure, via our FE reforms and flexible working, that everyone who wants training at work can access it.

To ensure parity of esteem across all pathways we will increase funding to careers services and advice in schools and colleges – reversing cuts over a number of years. These will be mandated to encourage vocational pathways before and after age 16 as well as at higher education.

We will set up a structural review of the HE and entire post-16 education sector in the first six months of a Plaid-led government.

This review will be charged with delivering curriculum reforms in post-compulsory education and training in Wales similar to those being taken forward for three to 16-year-olds. These reforms will shift the focus from examinations, testing and certification, to emphasise knowledge, learning and skills. The reforms will remove early specialisation, the tendency to 'teach to the test' and eliminate the artificial choices between STEM and non-STEM subjects.

Lecturers' pay and conditions will be improved to retain and attract high quality professionals.

Further Education

We will conduct an urgent Ministerial review of post 16 provision, put in place systems to end needless competition in post 16 education, and place vocational education on the same foundations as academic learning in school and university.

We support the professionalisation of the FE workforce. By using existing legislation we can set professional standards and minimum requirements of qualification for FE teachers. Keeping and attracting the best dual profession lecturers in the classroom will be a priority.

Education

We will implement the recommendations of the 2020 ColegauCymru report *Further Education and Building Better* on vocational education. Wales's network of Further Education Colleges will be made community hubs for collaboration with businesses and local authorities to create more coherent local labour markets. A priority will be to enhance workforce skills and qualifications in relation to foundation activities in the care, construction and agriculture sectors.

We will establish Institutes of Technology on existing FE sites. This will strengthen collaboration between business and further education institutes, support the practical application of innovation and new technology, and strengthen supply chains between SMEs and anchor companies.

In addition, we will:

- Ensure Wales joins the OECD's Survey of Adult Skills, the PIAAC, and set goals as exacting as we do for schools in the context of PISA.
- Increase the cash value of the Educational Maintenance Allowance to £45 a week and Welsh Government Learning Grant for FE students to £2,350 a year – restoring them to their mid-2000s levels. We will raise the eligibility threshold for Education Maintenance Allowance and Welsh Government Learning Grant so that no young person in poverty misses out

Apprenticeships

We will adopt a model of longer apprenticeships with more off the job training at a younger age, expanding apprenticeships among 16 to 18-year-olds, in line with other advanced economies. To do this we will encourage collaboration between independent training providers and our national network of Further Education colleges.

We will review the tax levers we have available to examine how they could better unlock skills investment from business. All employers in receipt of public money for skills development, as in all other areas, will be subject to fair work rules.

All apprentices under the age of 21 should be partnered with a Further Education college to ensure appropriate support, including access to college days or off-site training/education for key skills or other appropriate education choices.

In addition, we will:

- Establish a network with a focus on increasing the number of young people, from all backgrounds, accessing degree and higher-level apprenticeships as an alternative to university.
- Improve the access for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to the best apprenticeships. A portion of levy money will be ringfenced for spending on bursaries, outreach, or travel for disadvantaged apprentices.
- Create a UCAS-style portal where young people can easily find information about, and apply to, apprenticeships and FE courses, to address the fragmented applications process and increase parity of esteem with academic routes.
- Pilot a new Craft Expert programme aimed at providing routes for older workers to pass on experience to younger generations. This will build on the current master craftsperson apprenticeship framework being piloted in Engineering in Wales.
- Support the internationalisation of the FE curriculum giving Wales' vocational and technical learners access to world class skills and industrial technology.

Education

- Upgrade the skills levels of traditional women's roles, increasing their pay and the esteem in which they are held.
- Allocate a specific and rising proportion of the total apprenticeships budget to the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to ensure a significant rise in the proportion of apprenticeships that are Welsh-medium.
- Tackle under-representation of women and people of colour in apprenticeships with stretching targets, linked to funding, for all training providers delivering apprenticeships to address gender imbalances across apprenticeship pathways.

Higher Education

By the end of the Senedd term we aim to make Welsh universities among the best funded in the UK, by:

1. **Expanding the numbers studying at Welsh universities. Attracting greater numbers of Welsh-domiciled students as well as retaining the current number of UK and overseas students will result in a net increase of overall students.**
2. **Increasing Government investment in Research and Development.**

This investment must have as part of its goal helping Welsh universities rise up the global rankings, and thereby increase their attractiveness for Welsh-domiciled students currently opting for English universities.

The quid pro quo for this higher investment in Welsh universities will be an insistence on an ambitious reform programme. This will include addressing the rising administration and management salary costs in Universities by installing benchmarks of numbers of students to administrators, and administrators to faculty in Welsh universities. We must also see an

end to Vice-Chancellors paying themselves excessive salaries at the same time as they exploit the terms and conditions of lower-level staff. We will undertake a review of governance structures in Welsh universities to establish whether they are fit for purpose and ensure that top level positions are representative of the diversity of learners they serve.

Research

A Plaid Cymru government will take a leading role in providing research funding. We will seek to devolve Wales's share of UK Research and Innovation expenditure and for a block grant to be allocated based on population.

Wales currently spends around 1 per cent of its GDP on R&D (some £750m per annum). We should set a national goal of doubling that to 2 per cent by 2030. We will increase Government funding for innovation and R&D by £100m by the end of the Senedd term.

Welsh innovation strategy and delivery will be driven by a new National Innovation body.

In addition, we will establish an AI Institute for the Future Economy, including a new Lab for Workplace Innovation, to help position Wales on the global map as a digital nation and facilitate a more integrated approach to the application of leading-edge research on AI across Wales.

Student Financial Support

We will reduce the maximum tuition fee chargeable to Welsh-domiciled students at Welsh universities to £7,500. This will be the first step towards our long-term goal of making university education free again.

Tuition and maintenance loans and grants will be provided as at present to students studying at UK universities outside Wales.

Education

We will raise the teaching grant payment associated with each student to reflect more accurately the subject's reasonable costs and its social and economic value to students and taxpayers.

In addition, we will:

- Adapt the *Seren* Network to include a stronger partnership with Welsh universities to support people from disadvantaged backgrounds in applying to university.
- Introduce direct Welsh Government support to cover the costs to Welsh HEI's to provide larger provision for STEM, engineering, management, some medical courses, and technology courses.
- Protect inward and outward student mobility between Wales and the European Union post Brexit.

Lifelong Learning

To even up educational investment we need to commit to investing in lifelong learning not just paying it lip service. We need to start by creating a lifetime learning allowance. This will consist of a mixture of grants, loans, and a right to free provision.

We will offer a grant of £5,000 to the Personal Learning Accounts of every individual over 25 to train or retrain, with added loans to cover more expensive courses and maintenance costs for those who want to take courses full time (repaid in the same way as student loans). They will be available to anyone regardless of what previous funding they have received. Initially, we will trial this with those who have been made recently redundant.

Tuition and maintenance loans at Levels 4, 5 and 6, including for vocational qualifications, will be made available to all adults aged 18 or over, and available in both further and higher education.

We will address the fall in part-time and mature study over the past decade. This may include more blended learning options and a move away from three-year full-time bachelor's degrees to a greater mix of part-time, shorter and more vocational courses. Our childcare offer will be available to those for whom caring responsibilities are a critical barrier to learning.

Skills Framework for Wales

At the moment those who do not choose to go to university are badly served by our education system, if supported at all. By under-investing in practical, vocational, and technical education we are wasting talent and preventing people from realising their potential.

We will develop a new Skills Framework for Wales to achieve a better way of matching jobs to people and people to jobs.

We will create a one-stop-shop platform that will bring together existing careers and employability support to enable people to:

- Capture their skills, experiences, and job histories in an online profile.
- Risk-assess their current occupation and skills profile and locate suitable training, work experience, and alternative employment.
- Connect online with employers to discuss skills, training, and work experience opportunities.
- Learn about careers, training, and job opportunities in real time.
- Access their Personal Learning Account and make decisions as to how that account should be invested.



TRUST OUR
TEACHERS!

FARMING, RURAL WALES AND TOURISM

Summary

- Refocus support to help farmers transition to more sustainable, diverse and environmentally friendly forms of land use.
- Enact a Welsh Agriculture Bill that will place a greater emphasis on public goods such as decarbonisation, sustainable food production, and enhanced biodiversity.
- Establish a consultative Rural Senedd to strengthen the voice of rural communities.
- Create a cross sector Food System Commission to develop a holistic food strategy for Wales.
- Support a shift towards cultural tourism to promote our diverse culture to the world and contribute to the status of Welsh as a living language.
- Designate 2023 to be a Festival of Wales to showcase our diverse tourism offer to the world.

Farming, Rural Wales and Tourism

Plaid Cymru recognises the immense contribution that the agricultural sector makes to Wales. The multiple challenges facing the sector means that it's time to forge a new context for agriculture in Wales, starting with putting the resilience of our family farms at the heart of the industry's renaissance. Re-casting our farm support system for a post-Covid, post-Brexit era gives us a once-in-a-generation opportunity to make the decisive changes needed, with a focus on sustainability and co-operation.

We support Welsh farmers in their aim to be one of the most environmentally sustainable farming sectors globally.

We will introduce a Welsh Agriculture Bill that will place a greater emphasis on public goods such as decarbonisation, sustainable food production, and enhanced biodiversity.

We also recognise that in order for farms to be environmentally sustainable they must be economically sustainable. We will introduce a baseline support payment to offer the industry greater economic stability. This support will be used to encourage the highest standards of public health and animal health and welfare, and to facilitate a greater shift towards more low carbon and high nature value farming.

We will also utilise wider investment to support the transition to more sustainable and diverse forms of land use, including organic farming, regenerative agriculture, agroforestry and mixed farming.

A Plaid Cymru Government will commit to the full use of the EU 2014-20 Rural Development Programme funding by 2023. We will also retain a commitment to our share of funding towards what would have been the successor 2021-27 Rural Development Programme.

We will commission an independent review of the effectiveness and value for money of RDP projects thus far which will inform our proposals for future rural support.

Empowering Rural Communities

We will re-set the relationship between the Welsh Government and the agriculture industry. A consultative Rural Senedd, similar in form to Citizens Assemblies will strengthen the voice of rural communities and help influence the decisions that affect them.

Future farm support will target active farmers and Plaid Cymru will develop a strategy to bring new and young entrants into the industry. Local authority farms will play a key role and we will work with public bodies and the wider third sector to identify ways of protecting and enhancing the public farm estate as an important foothold for new entrants in the future.

We also recognise the important wider social contribution made by young farmers' clubs across Wales and will work with Wales YFC to develop and grow the key role they play in our rural communities.

We commit to using the most effective measures to control and eradicate TB utilising lessons from elsewhere in the UK and beyond. We will also support work to tackle other animal health challenges such as Bovine Viral Diarrhoea and Sheep Scab.

We will:

- Work closely with Welsh Police and Crime Commissioners and the UK Government to tackle rural crime, particularly to seek the devolution of powers to take greater action on attacks by dogs on farm livestock.
- Support the Welsh wool industry, through encouraging the use of Welsh wool in, carpets, public buildings and housing construction and renovation projects, as well as supporting efforts to increase Welsh Wool research and processing capacity.
- Invest in rural science and technology to research, develop and promote more sustainable methods of meeting needs. We



Farming, Rural Wales and Tourism

will particularly focus on innovation relating to climate change adaptation, resource use efficiency, waste reduction, livestock and crop improvement and the control of pests and diseases.

- Work with farmers to reduce the use and impacts of fertilisers, pesticides, herbicides, antibiotics and the extent of nitrate run-off.
- Aim to considerably increase the level of organic farming in Wales and significantly grow the horticulture sector.
- Work with the UK Government to improve rural connectivity – particularly broadband and mobile phone services.
- Commit to working with rural mental health charities, farming unions, Wales YFC and others to ensure that support and advice is available and accessible to those who need it.

Plaid Cymru will revisit the Nitrate Vulnerable Zone regulations introduced by the Welsh Labour Government just weeks ahead of the election.

Enforcing an all-Wales Nitrate Vulnerable Zone was contrary to the advice of the Welsh Government's statutory advisor, Natural Resources Wales. We believe the regulations are disproportionate and that a 'farming by calendar' approach risks causing new pollution incidents. The capital investment required to meet the new regulations (estimated at up to £360 million by the Government) is nearly £100 million more than the total income from farming in Wales in 2019. This will force many farms out of business.

Instead, we will work with the industry, Natural Resources Wales and other stakeholders to repeal Labour's NVZs and introduce better targeted regulations within our first six months in Government. This will be complemented by a robust voluntary approach elsewhere, based on schemes that have clearly demonstrated success in reducing levels of nitrates.

Fisheries, Seafood and Aquaculture

Wales's fisheries, seafood and aquaculture sectors have an opportunity to develop and contribute to the ambition for Wales to be at the forefront of sustainable food production. There is also greater export potential for Welsh fisheries than is currently secured. New technology and advancements must be grasped alongside a more open and inclusive approach to fisheries management, where good science, engagement and research sits at the heart of a co-management approach with our fishing communities.

The sector has faced numerous challenges in recent years, not least from Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic. Plaid Cymru is committed to introducing a Wales Fisheries Bill. We will work with industry stakeholders to develop fisheries and aquaculture policy, backed by a strategy that has sustainability, investment and industry engagement at its core.

Animal Welfare

A Plaid Cymru Government will work with stakeholders to build upon the high level of animal welfare standards already in place in Wales. We will:

- Improve the enforcement and delivery of licensing requirements relating to dog breeding establishments in Wales, building on the recent review of regulations by the Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework Group.
- Improve horse welfare by taking action on equine tethering.
- Review pet vending, focusing especially on the regulation of animals sold online.
- Issue model tenancy proposals on pets in social housing and work to reduce barriers between homeless pet owners and homeless shelters.
- Support the development of statutory codes of practices for the keeping of exotic pets in Wales.

Farming, Rural Wales and Tourism

- Ban the keeping of primates as pets.
- End the giving of pets as prizes.

A Welsh Food System

Plaid Cymru wants to see a Wales where everyone has dignified access to nutritious and sustainably produced food, in a way that secures a fair income for farmers and all food sector workers.

A Plaid Cymru Government will develop a food system strategy for Wales by establishing a cross sector Food System Commission, to be tasked with developing a roadmap towards a food System that's fit for future generations.

We will increase Welsh processing capacity across the board. Reversing the loss of local processing capacity will be a positive move for the communities who live and work in rural areas, for animal welfare, for tackling climate change and for the rural economy.

All public procurement of food should prioritise the purchase of Welsh-produced food. Local and regional public procurement – for example in schools, hospitals and council offices – can help create markets for local food businesses.

In addition we will:

- Promote 'Made in Wales' on Welsh food products, working with producers to create high value products to appeal to a wider market.
- Create an online sales platform for Welsh food for domestic consumption.
- Provide start-up funds for creating publicly or cooperatively owned shops specialising in domestically produced products to give people access to high-quality food, give producers direct access to customers and to reinvigorate town centres.

- Support the development of urban farms in creating ultra-local food systems in our cities.

Tourism

Plaid Cymru recognises the importance of the tourism industry across Wales as an employer and in attracting investment into the country. We will encourage tourist enterprises which provide maximum benefit to local communities rather than extractive tourism that sees Wales as a resource to be exploited by outside interests. Bearing this in mind we will explore ways of increasing local ownership and control of the industry.

We want to promote Wales as a top quality, sustainable tourism destination with activities and experiences based on our natural resources, our produce, our unique coast and landscape, and our language, culture, and heritage.

Heritage tourism is the most popular and traditional form of tourism in Wales where tourists are exposed to history through museums and heritage sites. We support a shift towards cultural tourism which can significantly contribute to the status of Welsh as a living language. Cultural tourism also promotes our diverse Welsh culture to the world. This shift has been popular and successful in Ireland where tourism has centred on music and literary festivals and food.

A key example of such a community enterprise leading the way in cultural tourism is *Llety Arall* in Caernarfon. We will provide grants for similar ventures across Wales.

We will review the role of Visit Wales so that it is better placed to attract tourists to Wales. We will continue to bring more people to Wales and improve the tourist experience by focusing on joined-up services so that tourists can expect to stay close to events, access the latest tourism information and rely on public transport.

Farming, Rural Wales and Tourism

We will establish an Industry Task Force to develop a strategy for the future of the tourism sector. This will consider the benefits of:

- Introducing targeted reductions in business rates to help the tourism sector through the recovery and lobby the UK Government to reduce VAT for tourism businesses.
- Supporting the creation of locally and publicly owned alternatives to private sector platforms such as Uber and Airbnb.
- Creating a Welsh version of the state owned Parador system in Spain where heritage buildings (for example, converted chapels) can be restored as hotel accommodation.

We will support the *Llechi Cymru* Wales Slate World Heritage Status bid and will pursue its implementation regardless of the outcome to be announced this July.

We will work with heritage steam to safeguard the sector's future and to develop alternative fuels in the longer term.

Food Tourism

Food and gastronomy tourism is a key opportunity to promote the agricultural and hospitality sector. Food tourism offers an alternative means of local and regional development, with the ability to strengthen identities, enhance the tourist and local appreciation of the surrounding environment and encourage the regeneration of local heritage.

We will also collaborate with the National Parks to investigate and develop proposals to create a brand for products produced within our National Parks.

Festival of Wales

We will designate 2023 to be a Festival of Wales to showcase the diverse tourism opportunities in our beautiful country to the world. This will include our beaches, museums, cities, mountains, countryside, and our cultural and linguistic heritage. We will promote trips 'home' to Wales amongst our international Welsh diaspora so that they can join us and celebrate our successes as a nation and promote Saint David's Day and other notable Welsh celebrations and events.

Tourism Training

We will create a National Academy for the Welsh Tourism sector in our new *Arfor* western coastal region. This will include an on-site hotel and conference centre to provide 'hands-on' learning to students in catering and hospitality from apprenticeships up to degree level.



HOMES FOR ALL

Summary

- Permanently end rough sleeping on our streets through a rapid re-housing policy.
- End no fault evictions during the economic fall-out from Covid-19 and implement a new system of fair rents for the future.
- Create 50,000 public homes over the next five years – 30,000 council houses or other social housing, 5,000 cost rental homes at intermediate rent, and 15,000 genuinely affordable homes to buy.
- Cut the bills of average Council Tax payers through wholesale reform of the Council Tax system.
- Use planning and tax powers to tackle the second homes crisis.
- Appoint Managers to co-ordinate town centre development.



Homes for All

Homelessness

We will enshrine the right to housing in law. We will make Housing First the default option for anyone with complex needs who is experiencing homelessness and appoint a national director for Housing First throughout Wales.

In addition:

- We will require local authorities to adopt a rapid rehousing model, whereby anyone experiencing homelessness is guaranteed their own room, not merely floorspace for 12 hours a day, as immediate emergency accommodation.
- We will repeal section 74 of the Housing Act Wales (2014) which allows local authorities to end their duty of help to people who are still known to be homeless. We will bring a permanent end to the implementation of No Recourse to Public Funds conditions in Wales, so that everyone in Wales who needs to, is able to access housing and homelessness services.
- We will abolish the priority need system by the end of this Senedd term.
- We will scrap the bedroom tax as soon as we have the power to do so.

Creating new affordable homes

We will launch the biggest public house building programme for fifty years. We will build or convert 50,000 public homes over the next five years – 30,000 council houses or other social housing, 5,000 cost-rental homes at intermediate rent, and 15,000 genuinely affordable homes to buy.

These will include some of the 26,000 empty homes, and empty flats above shops, across Wales that will be brought back into use.

There are 67,000 households currently on housing waiting lists across Wales while 11,500 households presented as homeless in 2018-19.

Our aim is for publicly built housing to become a mainstream option for those on average incomes – not just those on low incomes.

Our aim is to make it affordable again for young people in all parts of Wales to buy their own home. Our definition of affordable homes will mirror the mortgage lending rule of 4.5 times the average local household income or around £125,000.

To keep costs down we will develop a public leasehold model where the land on which an affordable purchase home stands will never be sold but leased to the homeowner indefinitely at no or low cost, removing a significant element from the purchase price of the property.

We will replace the complex system of Section 106 agreements with a single uniform community infrastructure levy, with local authorities and the Welsh Government acting together to pool public and private funds for major housing schemes and local infrastructure delivery.

Arfor and Cymoedd, our two new regional development agencies, will explore using New Town Development Corporation powers to develop new planned communities at scale in the rural north and west and in the Heads of the Valleys. We will use our investment in new railway corridors and transport hubs as a platform for new housing development.

A Plaid Cymru Government will:

1. Reform the planning system to prevent the creation of poor-quality private sector new builds that fail to provide affordable housing. Instead, we will replace the flawed Local Development Plan framework with a more controlled planning system that will create mixed communities of both social and private housing well supported by public services and the necessary infrastructure.

Homes for All

2. Legislate so that housing developments will be required to contain at least 50 per cent genuinely affordable housing, delivered in a community setting.
3. Legislate to provide the Welsh Government with wide ranging housing powers to enable it to acquire land (on a compulsory basis if necessary) and provide housing, both directly and in conjunction with Local Authorities and Housing Associations and the private sector, to enable housing provision to be made on a coordinated basis.
4. We will restore to local authorities a central role of meeting local housing need in a variety of ways, depending on local circumstances. They will be able to use a new entity Unnos – Land and Housing Wales to build more social housing. In addition, they will be empowered to bring empty properties back into use and purchase private sector homes from landlords exiting the market to expand council and other social housing.
5. We will support a range of innovative models for developing affordable housing including small housing co-operatives and the charitable bond model using financial transactions monies as pioneered by the Scottish Government.

Unnos – Land and Housing Wales

Unnos – Land and Housing Wales will be a publicly owned company owned by and answerable to the Welsh Government, and accountable to the Senedd. A not-for-distributable profit company, *Unnos* will be self-sufficient through the charges it makes for its services and products.

At a time when interest rates are at an historic low, the rental streams from new social housing developments are increasingly attractive to long term investors such as pension funds. Operating through Unnos, a Plaid Cymru government will access funding from these long-term investors to finance a substantial and sustained increase in the provision of social and affordable housing in Wales, using the Welsh government's covenant to further reduce interest rate costs where desirable.

Unnos will:

- Be a centre of excellence for good construction practice in the housing sector, initially in respect of new build but also increasingly in other areas, such as retrofit and will be a source of advice and expertise to both housing associations and to Local Authorities wishing to expand their activities in the housing sector.
- Create Welsh supply chains and use local workforces and businesses, thereby supporting the local economy and existing Welsh house builders who have been squeezed out by the planning system's bias towards large developers.
- Play a strategic role for land assembly and compulsory purchase, working in partnership with local authorities, housing associations and other partners, brokering across Welsh Government departments to bring land to market and property for residential conversions.
- Focus on off-site/Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) methods. It will be provided with the means to establish production facilities (by way of loan or grant from the Welsh Government) to produce housing units. A direct result will be an immediate improvement in the environmental quality of new social housing.

Homes for All

- Support local construction SMEs through a national framework contract for housing procurement. It will direct Government financial support to the sector, channeled through the Development Bank, at smaller developers with viable projects unable to raise mainstream private sector finance, capping developers profit and limiting support to genuinely affordable house prices.
- Liaise with Local Authorities and Housing Associations to develop a portfolio of housing types to meet their requirements and agree with them a pipeline of demand.
- Provide a maintenance service for the properties constructed so that there will be a seamless approach between production and maintenance.
- Have as part of its mission the construction of housing which uses the minimum amount of carbon, both in construction and in terms of energy usage.
- Seek the powers to introduce a windfall tax on the profits of large developers and use the proceeds to solve the problems created by poor builds, which can often trap owners into poor quality flats and houses with no recourse, which has been the case with the cladding scandal.

Land and House Prices

We must end the problem of the unsustainable growth in house prices. Our Government will have an explicit goal of bringing average house prices back within the reach of the average citizen. Houses over time should cease to be seen as commodities or assets, but primarily as a decent place to live, a home. To achieve this, we will:

Planning and Environmental Standards

Social housing will be built to the highest possible environmental standards, with the most efficient use of energy and lowest possible emissions. Buildings and wider developments must take account of their historical, cultural and ecological context.

To tackle the scandal of poor-quality estates we will:

- Bring forward proposals for a new and fairer land and property tax, levied as a flat rate on owners not occupants based on up-to date values, to replace first business rates, and then, council tax.
- Reform compulsory purchase so land can be acquired at existing use value.
- Enact a new Community Rights Act and explore a community wealth fund to empower communities to buy community assets, including land, and a new national service to support them in the process.
- We will explore proposals for a Property Act to provide a legislative foundation for our commitment to ensure homes are genuinely affordable for people on local incomes.
- Introduce a moratorium on the sale of public assets, including land, into private hands without robust covenants to ensure they remain of community and public benefit.
- Legislate to end the scandal of leasehold homes with unfair service charges.
- Set a timetable and a strategy for homes in the private rental sector to reach the Welsh Housing Quality Standard.
- Improve consumer protection for poor quality in new builds.
- Ensure that past performance in delivering against planning obligations can become a material consideration in future planning applications so never again can developers with a poor reputation continue to get approval for housing.

Homes for All

Tenants' rights

We will introduce a Fair Rents Bill to provide tenancies of indefinite duration and end no-fault evictions. All rents will need to be assessed as fair and there will be a rent cap for increases. We will make tenancies transferable between generations as they were under the 1977 Rent Act.

We will give local authorities the power to set a Living Rent rule which will cap rent in rental pressure zones at a maximum of one third of local average income. In the social rented sector, we will also adopt a living rent model which links rent with local income, ending the current freedom for housing associations to raise rent above inflation.

We will introduce an Emergency Mortgage Rescue Scheme giving people the option to become tenants rather than face eviction, with the option to buy back in the future via a shared ownership structure.

We will grant local authorities and housing associations greater discretion to avoid evictions when arrears are caused by welfare cuts. We will end the placement of under-18s in bed and breakfast accommodation.

We will work with the police to ensure that in situations of domestic abuse, the default position will be that it is the victims who have the right to remain in their accommodation, unless there are significant safety issues.

We will strengthen the powers to deal with poor landlords that don't meet housing standards or social responsibilities. Through Rent Smart Wales they will be subject to annual vetting and struck off if they fail to comply. Local Authorities will then be given an opportunity to buy these properties to renovate and put out for rental.

Local Government

Council tax reform

A Plaid Cymru Government will reform council tax to make it fairer and more progressive. We will undertake a revaluation, increase the number of bands at the higher end of house valuations, and ensure that that council tax is more proportional to the value of properties. In addition, we will introduce a new system for allocating the Welsh Government's grant to local authorities with a needs-based formula involving a range of factors including poverty and rurality.

Why council tax needs reform

Council tax is out of date, regressive and distortionary. The values of properties in different parts of Wales have changed very differently over the 18 years since the last revaluation in 2003. For example, it has increased more than twice as much in Blaenau Gwent as in Wrexham. Properties are in increasingly arbitrary tax bands. Two households living in equally valuable properties in the same local authority can find themselves paying tax bills hundreds of pounds different just because their properties used to be worth different amounts in 2003. Council tax is also highly regressive with respect to property values.

Homes for All

A more proportional council tax will narrow the gap in property wealth between owners of high and low value properties. We expect that 20 per cent of households in the bottom fifth of income distribution will see their council tax bills fall by more than £200.

We will introduce proposals for a new Single Land and Property Tax covering residential, commercial, and industrial land (agricultural land will remain exempt) – beginning its implementation by scrapping the current system of non-domestic rates during this Senedd term.

Second homes

The increasing number of second homes in Wales, especially on the western seaboard, has become a mounting problem, one that has been cruelly exposed during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In Gwynedd, 40 per cent of the houses that go on the market every year are now bought as second homes.

The overuse of properties as second homes is driving local people out of the property market, putting unacceptable pressures on local services in peak season, and creating desolate, half-empty towns and villages in winter.

Many recommendations have been made recently, but have seen little in the way of robust action from the current Welsh Government. Plaid Cymru believes that it is the job of government to implement recommendations and deliver change. Last September, despite not being in government, Plaid Cymru published a cross-cutting plan *Rebuilding our Communities: Plaid Cymru's action plan on second homes* that can be implemented across each area of government.

A Plaid Cymru Government will put this plan into action. We will:

- Change the planning laws to allow councils to impose a cap on the number of second homes and to refuse permission for changing a dwelling from being a primary to a secondary residence.
- Allow councils to charge council tax premiums of up to 200 per cent on second homes and close the loophole that allows second homeowners to register their property as “businesses” in order to avoid paying the council tax premium.
- Bring forward regulations to treble the Land Transaction Tax charge on the purchase of second properties.
- Empower councils to build houses with a local conditions requirement that make it easier to bring empty properties back into use and redefine the term ‘affordable home’ (which currently includes properties worth over £250,000).
- Fund a pilot scheme to bring significant numbers of holiday homes into community ownership through public intervention in the existing housing market so that profits generated can be diverted to local developments such as the provision of social housing.

Town centres

Town and village centres are the heart of their communities. As shopping centres, they have been under threat from the growth of out-of-town superstores and retail parks, and the phenomenal growth of internet shopping during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Homes for All

A Plaid Cymru Government will:

- Make management of town centres with 30 or more commercial premises a statutory responsibility of local councils. This will include the appointment of managers to co-ordinate town centre investment, maintenance, and promotion, including the production of Town Centre Action Plans.
- Allocate capital and revenue funding for a Wales Urban Renaissance Programme to be renewed on a five-yearly basis.
- Harness the potential of remote and distributed working by creating a national network of serviced co-working centres in every community in Wales. To perpetuate remote working before the habit is lost, the first wave of superfast remote working hubs should be in place and ready for action within a few months using empty buildings such as banks, post offices and shops in town centres and empty chapels or pubs in smaller communities.
- Legislate to protect cultural venues from demolition, redevelopment, or loss of licence due to encroachment.
- Provide more investment and financial support for social infrastructure, including community spaces, libraries, and parks, and providing improved access for the disabled.
- Where appropriate make the upper floors of town centre premises rate-free and revise planning guidance for such premises to facilitate their conversion to residential, office or other employment uses.
- Where appropriate make town centres with very high vacancy rates (20 per cent plus), rate-free Enterprise Zones with a package of other aid and advice provided by Prosperity Wales, our new enterprise agency.

- Empower local authorities to take action on empty high street land and buildings including providing long leases for sub-lets to local organisations, businesses and initiatives to promote the local presence of a diverse range of organisations on the high street.
- Assist business to move from the periphery to create viable and lively centres.
- Introduce a new category (Grade III) of listed buildings – *Buildings of local importance* – that will need planning permission before being significantly altered or demolished.

Planning

For decades planning policy in England and Wales has been centred around big city growth and development. While this may be appropriate in England where most people live in cities and large towns, it is not appropriate in Wales. Our cities are relatively small, and three quarters of our population live in medium sized towns and small villages. Wales is also a land of hills and valleys, ill-suited to city sprawl and expansion.

A Plaid Cymru government will therefore re-set the top tier of planning in Wales – the National Development Framework - to define six new regions in Wales including two special development regions in Arfor, the western seaboard of Wales, and Cymoedd, the Valleys. The new NDF will have a distinctive vision for maximising the potential of each region. To this end we shall bring forward a process for agreeing new Strategic Development Plans, based on democratic structures, in each of these regions as early as practicable in the new Senedd term.

Based on Welsh rather than UK priorities, our approach will focus on public transport networks forming corridors between designated ‘development domains’.

Homes for All

We will restore balance to the local planning system in which the public have been marginalised and councillors forced to accept plans they do not support.

Our overall planning policy will be integrated with the activities of Prosperity Wales, the Valleys Development Authority, the Arfor Development Agency, and *Unnos – Land and Housing Wales*. This will result in a more proactive approach than the current situation that simply reacts to the plans of private developers, producing insufficient provision for public transport investment and other infrastructure, and excessive and unnecessary use of greenfield sites.

We will create an autonomous Welsh Planning Inspectorate, Cynllunio Cymru.

We will re-iterate that planning departments are bound to foreground the Equality Act, the Well-being of Future Generations Act, and also have duties for the safeguarding of children.

Our Government will actively consider how it could introduce expiry or review dates for large scale planning permissions where the construction of the development was subsequently so delayed that the planning conditions under which permission was granted no longer comply with Planning Policy Wales.

We will strengthen TAN 20 to reflect the new provisions in the Planning Act 2015 making linguistic impact a material factor for the first time.

We will strengthen the preference for brownfield over greenfield development and renovation over demolition in planning, housing and environmental policy.



A CONNECTED WALES

Summary

- Provide free bus travel for young people between 16 and 24 years old.
- Undertake a transformative investment in public transport and active travel infrastructure, substantially reducing car usage, aiming to halve the proportion of journeys made by car by 2030.
- Transport for Wales will be responsible for creating an all-Wales rail and bus network, connecting the north with the south and enabling public transport connectivity between all major centres of population.
- Create a new west coast rail line, connecting the north and south, and build a Valleys CrossRail, linking east and west.
- Deliver ultra-fast gigabit broadband to all Welsh homes and businesses by 2026.
- In place of the abandoned M4 Relief Road we will improve the mainline rail services in the south involving the building of six new stations between Severn Tunnel Junction and Cardiff.



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Way out

A Connected Wales

An interconnected community of communities

Plaid Cymru's vision is of Wales as an interconnected community of communities, resilient, prosperous, healthy, and environmentally sound. Major public transport improvements will play a crucial role in our regeneration plans for Arfor in the west and for the Valleys. These will connect our disconnected regions and communities and maximise their economic potential.

Beyond completing road projects already in the Wales Infrastructure Investment Plan Project pipeline, our aim is for an integrated public transport system, with greater reliance on environmentally friendly modes of travel. We will develop a national timetable, integrating rail and bus services, with national standards on frequency of service making travel by public transport possible in most parts of Wales.

To streamline, simplify and shorten the process for making major transport decisions, we will publish a new Transport Strategy and a new National Transport Finance Plan reflecting our new priorities by the end of 2021. We will seek the relevant powers to implement a public transport payroll levy on employers in Wales. This will be used to fund climate-friendly public transport.

Plaid Cymru supports the re-regulation of bus services and we will introduce the legislation required to allow a system of bus franchising to be developed in Wales.

We will seek the devolution of the power over road tax and fuel duty and the HGV Levy so we can create a replacement Eco-levy based on road use, local availability of public transport and emissions. This would be more environmentally effective and socially just.

Free Bus Travel for 16 to 24-year-olds

A Plaid Cymru government will provide free bus travel for young people between 16 and 24-years-old and retain free bus passes for the over 60s.

The economic consequences of Covid-19 are falling disproportionately on our young people. Free travel, administered via a smartcard, will help overcome barriers to education, training, and job opportunities.

Free travel on public transport services operated by the Welsh Government will ingrain a pattern of use for life and contribute to Wales's environment and climate change goals. Increased use of public transport will reduce traffic pollution and congestion. It will also contribute to the sustainability of local bus routes and the viability of many rural communities.

Digital Connectivity

We will develop a national connectivity strategy, combining our plans for integrated green public transport with those for broadband improvement.

We will deliver ultra-fast gigabit broadband to all Welsh homes and businesses by 2026.

Enhanced digital technology will encourage more homeworking, a major change to travel patterns that can reduce carbon emissions, congestion and in many cases stress. Until now this potential has been largely untapped. However, the Covid-19 lockdowns have resulted in a surge in home working and revealed to many employers and employees the advantages in time and money.

We will invest in a major programme to provide superfast remote working hubs, initially in less prosperous communities, to cater for people whose home environment or equipment is unsuitable for remote working and for firms

A Connected Wales

with inadequate socially distanced space to accommodate all their workers all the time.

We will incentivise local government in committing to purchasing full fibre broadband services, as a means of providing certainty of demand and encouraging investment.

We will develop a national Welsh-based publicly owned or mutual broadband network company to address connectivity in parts of Wales.

We will change planning law so that all new buildings are built with gigabit-capable broadband from the outset.

We will ensure better access for fibre builders to existing infrastructure and change the rules on planning consent, access to land and the use of the latest digging technology to speed up rollout.

A National Rail Network

There is no comprehensive rail network connecting the different parts of Wales. North-south journeys must be made through England and the internal rail lines are not 'joined up'.

A major reason is that while responsibility for railways is fully devolved to Scotland and Northern Ireland this is not the case for Wales. Since 2018 Wales has had responsibility for the main rail franchise for operating the rail services in Wales but not the railway tracks and other infrastructure. This means that decisions on railway infrastructure in Wales are made by Network Rail on an England-and-Wales basis and invariably Wales loses out as more populous areas in England take priority.

We will seek full devolution, with adequate funding, for all rail services in Wales.

Transport for Wales

Once we have achieved devolution of all rail services, we will task Transport for Wales with creating an all-Wales rail network, connecting the north with the south and enabling rail traffic between the major centres of population. This core network will include:

- The north and south Wales main lines.
- The central Wales line, linking Swansea, Llanelli and Shrewsbury.
- The Cambrian line, linking Aberystwyth with Shrewsbury.
- The new West Coast line linking Carmarthen with Bangor and on to Amlwch.
- Metros for the South-east, North-east, and Swansea Bay and the Western Valleys.

This network will support transit-oriented development along its route, calculated to enhance economic development in the most sustainable and climate responsible way.

The Great (Welsh) Train Robbery

We need full devolution of railway infrastructure as well as operations to Wales. This will entitle Wales to full equivalent funding for schemes such as HS2 high-speed rail line in England.

Because we do not control our rail infrastructure we receive no balancing increases in the Welsh block grant to compensate for hugely expensive projects such as HS2 which benefits only England and in this case is harmful to the Welsh economy. Under the Barnett formula Scotland and Northern Ireland will be entitled to a proportion of the HS2 costs. This means Wales will lose out by £250m a year while Scotland will benefit by £350m. Over the lifetime of the project, it means £11 billion for Scotland but nothing for Wales.

A Connected Wales

Transport for Wales will be responsible for:

- Preparing a new national transport plan within the first year of government, for all modes of travel, with projects listed in order of priority.
- Itemising a ten-year investment programme for implementation of the plan, in partnership with Prosperity Wales and the Development Bank for Wales once its remit has been expanded to include infrastructure projects.
- Delivering on strategic objectives, including:
 1. The shortening of journey times from Cardiff to Swansea, first to 45 minutes then to half an hour.
 2. Improving journey-times between Bangor and Cardiff.
 3. Opening a new rail corridor using the Swansea District Line to achieve faster and more frequent services between west and mid Wales to Cardiff.
- Overseeing the implementation of the Metro for the south-east, operating in collaboration with the Valleys Development Authority once it is established, and progressing plans for a Metro service for Swansea Bay and the Western Valleys.
- Producing a Strategic Development Plan for the North-East that will identify opportunities for Transit Oriented Development linked to the proposed Metro network.
- Developing proposals for a North West metro plan, including a new Amlwch to Dolgellau 'tram-train' service and extension of the Conwy line to Bala and Trawsfynydd.
- Managing Wales-wide bus services.
- Combining rail with a regulated bus service to ensure a public transport option is provided for all parts of Wales, including small towns and villages which currently have only sporadic public transport facilities.
- Managing the Government-sponsored Wales-wide TrawsCymru bus service network so integrating it with the national rail network operated by the Government controlled Transport for Wales Rail Ltd and other operators franchised in England.
- Ensuring ticket fares and provision don't only favour 'traditional' working and travel patterns, and public service providers are trained on sexual harassment in public spaces.
- Introducing a Wales-wide National bus and rail Smart Card ticketing service for passenger convenience. Multi-journey discounts should cater for part-time workers as well as season tickets designed for a five day working week.
- Producing an Active Travel Plan for Wales with a target for 50 per cent more commuter travel to be undertaken by cycling by 2030. Sufficient space will be allocated on all new rolling stock to enable train and bike commutes to become a practical option on the Welsh rail network.
- We will task Transport for Wales with producing detailed feasibility studies on key projects including:
 1. Reopening the Amman Valley line to passengers.
 2. Extending the Rhondda Fawr line to Tynnewydd.
 3. Reopening the line to Amlwch.
 4. Connecting Blaenau Ffestiniog with Trawsfynydd.
 5. Linking Llangollen to Wrexham.
 6. Reopening the Mumbles Tramway.
 7. Linking Ystrad Mynach to Bedlinog.

A Connected Wales

Reducing car journeys by half by 2030

Our aim is to reduce car usage to 50 per cent of all journeys by 2030, with 30 per cent using public transport, 10 per cent walking and 10 per cent cycling.

To achieve this level of change we envisage a major shift in capital investment from roads to public transport. We want to move Wales away from a system dominated by petrol-driven cars towards more sustainable transportation. We will allocate at least 50 per cent of capital transport spend on improving bus and train services.

We will explore the use of financial and other powers to reduce car use. Measures could include restricting parking in city centres, differential road pricing, while recognising the different context in rural communities. We will introduce a target for reducing road traffic in Wales, with five-year milestones, as part of the legal requirement to achieve net zero carbon emissions.

M4 Congestion

Plaid Cymru rejects the UK Government's costly and environmentally damaging proposal for a new M4 motorway relief road south of Newport. The £1.6 billion it would cost would displace many more worthy projects including public transport improvements throughout Wales. It would be environmentally damaging, both directly on the Gwent Levels and indirectly, through carbon emissions and pollution. Its effect would be to further increase commuting by car and push congestion on the M4 further west.

With six motorway junctions but only one railway station, Newport needs more stations not more motorway traffic. We support Lord Burns' South East Wales Transport Commission's recommendations for upgrading the southern main railway line to provide six new stations and an improved commuter service.

We will develop a comprehensive infrastructure plan for vehicle electrification. We will invest in a nationwide publicly owned charging network, including the next generation of ultra-rapid charging points at petrol stations across Wales. Our national energy company will ensure the energy grid keeps pace with demand and ensures our new electric cars are powered by local, renewable energy where possible.

In addition:

- By 2025 we will facilitate the creation of low emission zones in Swansea, Cardiff, Newport and Wrexham, with charges for high-emission vehicles. These will become ultra-low emission zones by 2027, and zero emission zones by 2030, with all petrol and diesel cars banned from designated town and city centres by that date.
- We will invest in recharging infrastructure to encourage the take-up of electric vehicles.
- Local authorities and public bodies will be required to provide electrification points in all public car parks and regulate to ensure there is provision in private car parks with capacity for more than 100 vehicles.
- We will regulate to ensure that 10 per cent of all parking places in new residential developments have charging stations.

A Connected Wales

- We will establish a National Advice Service to advise householders on installing domestic charging for electric vehicles and the use of additional charging sources such as Solar panels. We will support cost effective charging in the workplace.
- We will work with public bodies to phase out all petrol and diesel cars from the public sector fleet by 2025, with no new petrol and diesel light commercial vehicles purchased by 2027.
- We will aim to phase out the sale of new petrol and diesel only cars and vans in Wales by 2027 – three years earlier than the rest of the UK.
- We will explore proposals for electric-only highways and tunnels in areas of high air pollution and congestion.
- Showcase the potential for longer-distance cycleways along strategic road network and other main roads radiating 15km from regional centres that draw significant commuter traffic, for example Aberystwyth, Bangor, Merthyr and Pontypridd.
- Create incentives to encourage the take-up of e-bikes and establish an industrial strategy to promote their manufacturing in Wales.
- Establish a demonstration city to show the potential for e-cargo bikes to replace vans and cut HGV traffic.
- Provide the Valleys Regional Park with funds to extend, maintain and market its extensive cycle path network and ensure that the Rhondda and Abernant tunnels become important tourist attractions. We will also investigate the feasibility of creating a similar facility along the disused railway lines in the former north-eastern coalfield.

Active travel and 20-minute neighbourhoods

Walking and cycling are not only more sustainable than motorised transport in environmental terms but can also be an important part of healthy living.

A Plaid Cymru government will work towards creating 20-minute neighbourhoods in all our towns and cities providing convenient, safe, pedestrian access to the places people need to go and the services people use nearly every day: public transport, shopping, school, parks, and social activities.

We will:

- Require local authorities to set ambitious targets for modal shift including substantially increasing the provision of cycle routes.
- Set out a national target that 10 per cent of all trips are done via cycling or scootering by 2030.

- Make 20mph the default speed limit in all built up areas.
- Undertake an investigation into measures that should be taken to address the annual toll of around 100 deaths and 1,000 serious injuries as a result of traffic accidents in Wales.
- Establish a programme to relocate public sector offices to town and city centres away from out-of-town developments.

Buses

We will give local authorities the power to establish their own municipal bus companies. Transport for Wales will establish a publicly owned bus operator, ready to step in at any location where commercial operators do not offer good-value contracts.

A Connected Wales

We will accelerate the development of Regional Transport Authorities, clearly setting out their purpose, governance, and financial arrangements as well as their relationship with Transport for Wales, local authorities, and Welsh Government. To facilitate greater coordination of services we will bring all bus, taxi and coach commissioning together, pooling the budgets for school transport, the Bus Services Support Grant and concessionary fares.

We support the re-regulation of bus services and we will explore options to introduce the legislation required to allow a system of bus franchising to be developed in Wales.

In addition, we will:

- Extend the TrawsCymru service as a national bus service that serves major towns across the country, prioritising those communities without regular rail connections.
- Introduce a more integrated information service for passengers with disabilities.
- Establish a National Bus Stations Improvement Programme to mirror the investment pipeline for rail.

Taxis

The current legislation in which every one of the 22 local authorities in Wales has different standards for the operation of taxis and their drivers needs reform. We will review the current Welsh Government consultation which proposes to merge the regulation of taxis (Hackney carriage vehicles) which can be hailed on the street and operate from official taxi ranks, with private hire vehicles which cannot.

Cardiff Wales Airport

Expansion of air travel does not form an important part of our overall transport policy because of its contribution to global warming. However, we recognise that air travel is an essential element of international communication and the tourism industry. A viable international airport must therefore remain a part of the overall transportation infrastructure of the country. At the same time, we will:

- Press UK Government to place a duty on aviation fuel to remove its current tax break. Pro rata this would raise some £50-70m a year for Wales.
- Promote a move to synthetic and biofuels for aviation and press for it to be made mandatory by 2030 at an international level.
- Reduce the impact of aviation-based emissions by creating a national climate offset company based at Cardiff airport. This will embrace a range of techniques as part of an auditable carbon offset scheme. All public sector air travel in Wales should be offset by law.

Like all airports Cardiff Wales has been hit hard by the impact of Covid-19 against a background of successive UK governments centralising air travel at Heathrow, involving long journeys to access that facility. Our priorities for Cardiff airport include:

- Pressing for Air Passenger Duty to be devolved to Wales.
- Growing Cardiff Airport's share of existing airfreight business.
- Integrating public transport links to the airport into the Metro.

A Connected Wales

- Maximising the economic opportunities represented by the wider maintenance, repair, and overhaul cluster in the region.
- Maintaining the Intra-Wales air service between Cardiff and Ynys Môn and ensure that user-friendly public transport is available at both destinations.

Ports

Responsibility for ports regulation should be transferred to the Welsh Government. We will develop a ports and maritime strategy for Wales, focusing on opportunities in freight and distribution, cruise tourism and renewables related developments.

We will work with port owners and the private sector as part of this strategy to draw up a specific master plan for each individual port in Wales and review road and rail connections to ports as part of our National Transport Plan.



WELSH LANGUAGE

Summary

- Introduce a Welsh Language Education Act to give every child the gift of fluency in Welsh.
- Raise the status of and allocate additional funding for Prosiect 2050 (a million Welsh speakers by 2050) which with a 'more than a million speakers' mandate and as a central part Government, will be able to influence policy decisions across all departments.
- Set a target of 1,000 new Welsh language spaces, including cultural spaces and workplaces, to increase the use of Welsh.
- Establish a new 'Menter Ddigidol Gymraeg' as part of a new digital strategy for the language.
- Extend the Language Commissioner's remit and powers into the rest of the private sector.
- Double the funding for the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol.

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Welsh Language

A Million Welsh-speakers

Plaid Cymru wants a genuinely bilingual Wales in which citizens feel free to use their preferred language in their daily lives. To achieve this, we need to substantially increase the number of active speakers of Welsh across the country, ensuring that they have every opportunity to use the language as they choose.

We will ensure that the Welsh language is fully mainstreamed into all Welsh Government policies, guidance, and strategies.

For the language to thrive sustainably we need to concentrate on its everyday use in our communities, workplaces and public services.

Therefore, we support Cymdeithas yr Iaith's 'More than a million' vision which extends the language agenda beyond mere numbers, including setting a target to create 1,000 new Welsh language spaces by the end of the next Senedd term and raising investment to the level in the Basque country over time.

We will ask the Welsh Language Commissioner to review and revise the education targets in the current government's Welsh language strategy in order to ensure they will meet the one million speakers target.

We endorse the recommendations of the Welsh Language Commissioner in his *Manifesto* for the 2021 *Senedd Election*. We endorse the current target of a million Welsh-speakers by 2050 and the enhanced 'more than a million' agenda. We will:

- Elevate the status of Prosiect 2050 (the current Welsh Language Unit within Welsh Government) as part of a fully-fledged Welsh language department responsible for leading the language-restoration strategy.

- Establish a new unit within government, bringing in outside expertise to take advantage of behavioural science innovation to make effective use of regulatory, policy and other incentives to increase the use of the language.
- Examine the case for an arms-length Welsh Language Agency in the future.
- Extend the Language Commissioner's remit, along with regulatory powers and duties, into additional fields including the private sector and town and country planning.
- Implement a timetable for the preparation and approval of regulations to expand Welsh language Standards to all the remaining bodies and sectors covered in the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 to inject new momentum and impetus into this important work.
- Expand Welsh-medium education and build a bilingual workforce by increasing major new funding for Welsh for Adults, releasing teachers and carers from work to learn or improve their Welsh; supporting parents who want to establish Welsh as the language of the home; and enabling people who move to Wales to learn the language.
- Create 1,000 new Welsh-medium workplaces, including three Welsh Government departments.
- Integrate the work of the Mentrau Iaith and Welsh-language Centres, setting them a new 'more than a million' mandate to network the Welsh-speaking community, promote the use of Welsh at the local level, working with Welsh-medium schools, the Urdd, Young Farmers Clubs, and other organisations.
- Establish a 'Menter Ddigidol Gymraeg' (Welsh language Digital Initiative) as part of a new digital strategy for the language in collaboration with others.

Welsh Language

- Ensure that the additional expenditure for realising Project 2050 will be clearly identified in the first budget of a Plaid Cymru Government, with the aim of raising investment in promotion of the language to levels similar to the Basque Country over the Senedd term.

The Welsh language at work

We want to encourage a greater use of Welsh in the workplace. We will work with the National Centre for Learning Welsh to set up a workforce training programme that will provide structured Welsh-language training and immersion courses, including financial support to release employees to learn Welsh and improve their language skills.

We will provide support, incentives, and advice to entrepreneurs and businesses who operate through the Welsh language so that they can develop their bilingual business model. We will work with small and medium sized businesses across Wales to develop apprenticeship places in Welsh. We will also expand the use of the Welsh Language as a language of administration within local government, public-sponsored bodies, and the wider public sector.

Welsh-medium education

We commit to ensuring primary education in Wales becomes properly bilingual so that every child emerges at eleven years old being able to understand and communicate in both Welsh and English. We will introduce a Welsh Education Act based on Gareth Pierce's report *Welsh in education: strengthening through legislation*, to:

1. Establish clear and properly incentivised statutory targets to normalise and expand Welsh-medium education in order to meet the one million speakers target.
2. Establish national workforce planning targets to enable the rapid expansion of Welsh-medium education.

3. Implement the commitment to a single continuum of learning Welsh for all pupils.
4. Set a long-term statutory goal of universal Welsh medium education as part of the Cymraeg 2050 target.

We will consider establishing the right to free transport to Welsh-medium schools.

We will improve Foundation Phase teaching and the provision of Welsh, making use of the immersion model, so that all pupils are able to speak Welsh to an acceptable standard by the age of seven. We will provide support so that teachers of all age groups are able to improve their Welsh language skills.

We will work with childcare providers, such as Mudiad Meithrin, to ensure that sufficient Welsh language childcare is available and normalised in all parts of Wales.

The new Curriculum for Wales will contain a single Welsh language learning path and qualification for all.

We will also prioritise:

- Protection against closure of Welsh-medium schools unless the Language Commissioner has considered the effect of their closure on Welsh as a community language and is satisfied there is no detriment and that the process should go ahead.
- Setting of targets for the increase of provision of Welsh-medium teaching.
- Establishing a long-term statutory goal of universal Welsh medium education as part of the 2050 target.
- Providing targets for increasing the number and percentage of subjects taught through the medium of Welsh in schools currently teaching mainly through English, as recommended by Professor Sioned Davies in her 2013 report *One Language for All*.

Welsh Language

- Training Welsh-medium teachers; reducing fees and providing greater incentives for Initial Teacher Education, including considering the option of extending the course to allow every trainee teacher to become fluent in the language.
- Follow-on Initial Teacher Education years for those teachers learning Welsh.
- Creating a scheme to encourage people to gain sufficient proficiency in order to teach through the medium of Welsh.
- Investment in a Welsh for Adults programme to train more Welsh speaking teachers.
- Establishing a new fund to expand access to the Welsh language to all parts of society, including funding initiatives to provide free access to events and the right to learn Welsh to marginalised groups such as refugees and asylum seekers.
- Immersion centres in every part of Wales for incoming children to acquire Welsh, based on the Gwynedd model.
- Extending the *Athrawon Bro* system.
- Creating a national programme of language awareness, including the benefits of multilingual education.

Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol

We will continue to support the *Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol* to provide higher and further education through the medium of Welsh and for academics to conduct research in Welsh. We will double the funding for the *Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol* to enable it to:

- Fully develop its Further Education and Apprenticeship Welsh-medium Action Plan.
- Recruit and train a bilingual workforce, both in teaching and more generally, to strengthen the use of the Welsh language in the workplace.

In addition, the provision of new or expanded Welsh-medium halls of residence will become a condition of Welsh Government financial support to higher education.

Caring through the medium of Welsh

We will work to increase the number of Welsh speakers working in healthcare in Wales so that Welsh speaking patients are able to obtain NHS services in Welsh. Welsh-language skills will be a key qualification within the NHS.

Status of the Welsh language

We will take steps to further strengthen the status of the language. We will introduce legislation to ensure that Welsh language place names in the built and natural environments are safeguarded and promoted for future generations.

We will press for the Welsh language to have official status in proceedings at Westminster while we remain part of the United Kingdom.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Summary

- Assist the arts sector to emerge from the pandemic by creating a Welsh Freelancers Fund to support a corps of 1,000 freelance workers to work within the community and in schools, backed by a basic income of £1,000 a month for two years.
- Embed support for the arts across every part of government through a new and inclusive Arts and Culture Strategy.
- Establish a dedicated National Gallery of Contemporary Art at a location other than Cardiff, showcasing the best of national and international visual culture.
- Support the proposals to develop Cyfarthfa Castle and Park at Merthyr Tydfil into a national centre for industrial heritage.
- Establish a new body to regulate and improve broadcasting in Wales as part of a fully devolved broadcasting system.
- Develop a bid to host the Commonwealth Games in Wales in 2030 or 2034.



Culture, Media and Sport

Culture – at the nation’s heart

Culture is at the heart of our nation’s way of life. It defines us. It is integral to every community. It is the umbilical cord between generations and localities. It is essential to our well-being and cohesion as a society. It is also the means by which our diverse identities engage with each other, and by which we engage with the world. The extent to which we recognise all this in a practical way is a measure of a mature and civilised society.

In the last year people at all levels have been acutely conscious of the cultural deficit in their lives – whether that be estrangement from the football pitch or terrace, the club or concert hall, theatre, gallery or festival. These are the collective experiences without which many have been left with feelings of loneliness, isolation and emptiness.

On the other hand, it has also been a time when, falling back on their own resources, or taking advantage of the increased online output from cultural organisations, many people have found new cultural interests.

It is for all these reasons that culture and sport – all vital expressions of our history and social traditions, as well as of our future aspirations – at the heart of the full span of public policy and government action in central and local government, in economic development, in health and education, and in our regard for our environment, whether urban or rural. Every department of government will be required to make a positive and material response.

This is what we mean by the fully inclusive cultural strategy that we intend to build and sustain, so as to re-establish the myriad connections and shared experiences that have been threatened by the pandemic, but which, together, make a society.

In the process we will foster the very creativity and innovation that will be critical to the future success of our economy, enabling us to enrich the sense of

place in every community, and fulfilling the explicit and implicit aspirations of Wales’s pioneering Well-being of Future Generations Act.

Cultural recovery

We will ensure that the process of cultural recovery from the depredations of Covid will take account of its effects on our individual artists and freelancers as well as on the nation’s key cultural institutions.

Individual artists and freelancers are a vital component of the cultural sector – writers, artists, musicians, set designers, technicians working in theatres, at festival venues or for touring companies. Often, they are people who make a key contribution to cultural activity at the community level. But whether working alone or for companies and institutions, in many instances they have, individually, been severely affected by this year of closure.

The revival of work by the main arts organisations will in itself assist the revival of the corps of freelance workers, but we must also support freelancers in their vital contribution at the community level and within schools – combatting mental health problems and enhancing the lives and skills of our young people.

We will create a **Welsh Freelancers Fund**, a cultural basic income, to assist 1,000 freelance workers to work in the community, offering an income of £1,000 a month for two years.

Cultural institutions

Our national cultural institutions will be integral to the delivery of the new Culture Strategy. They will need the support of the Welsh Government and of the Arts Council of Wales over a sustained period to recover from the financial effects of the pandemic.

National Theatre Wales, Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru, the National Library of Wales, National Museum Wales, Literature Wales, National

Culture, Media and Sport

Dance Company Wales, Books Council of Wales, Wales Millennium Centre, Welsh National Opera, Ffilm Cymru Wales, National Eisteddfod of Wales, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, and Urdd Gobaith Cymru have all been impacted by the pandemic.

These are key institutions for the cultural life of the nation. We will protect their valuable contribution, their independence, and their financial viability.

We will also work with them to ensure that they represent the diversity of Wales. Our history, heritage and culture must represent and be open to everyone that lives in Wales. We will also seek to extend their role in promoting the culture of Wales to international audiences, both at home and abroad.

Enhancing our arts and culture

Strengthening the local

The impact of imposed austerity has had a harsh effect on the role of local authorities in the provision of arts and culture. In all areas councils have struggled to maintain provision. In some areas they have withdrawn completely. Even where resources are stretched councils should have a formal responsibility to take a lead in this field.

We will require all local authorities to:

- Act as a convener and enabler of arts and culture within their boundaries.
- Establish a **local cultural consortium** to bring local cultural networks together.
- Give special attention to:
 1. Encouraging participation in the arts by children and young people, particularly those from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.
 2. Providing greater access to the arts for people of colour, disabled people as well as other marginalised people.

3. Promoting the use of the Welsh language in arts activities, including new Welsh language spaces.
4. Ensuring that Welsh history and heritage is integral to the delivery of the school curriculum, and that it reflects the diversity of Wales.

As part of enhancing the work of the local authority-based Partnership Councils we will work with the Arts Council of Wales, CADW, sector representatives and stakeholders such as Race Council Cymru to develop improved relationships between locally based cultural activities and our national institutions.

Funding according to need

The economic condition of Wales – the high incidence of poverty and social deprivation across its many hard-pressed communities – justifies special funding over and above the Barnett formula. This should also apply to the apportionment of lottery funds.

We will press for an additional 1 per cent in Wales's share of all UK lottery funds to recognise these additional needs.

Museums, Galleries and Libraries

The National Museum Network

Wales can be proud of the network of National Museum Wales venues across the nation. We also recognise the success of the free entry policy for those museums and will maintain it. At the same time, we will ensure the integrity of all of our national museums as well as their viability.

We will also support continued improvement schemes across that network, following the success of the redevelopment of the St Fagan's National Museum of History.

Culture, Media and Sport

New Initiatives

National Gallery of Contemporary Art

We will realise long-held ambitions to create a dedicated National Gallery of Contemporary Art, representing the visual culture of Wales, both in terms of creativity and collection, and showcasing the best of national and international visual culture. We will, in the first year of government, identify a venue for a Gallery at a location other than Cardiff.

We will continue to invest in the ten centres across Wales that already exhibit contemporary visual culture and add an additional one for the valleys located in the Rhondda.

Cyfarthfa Castle and Park

We will support the proposals to develop Cyfarthfa Castle and Park at Merthyr Tydfil into a national centre for industrial heritage. This will complement our proposals for a new Valleys Development Authority.

National Digital Library

We will continue our support for the creation and development of the National Digital Library. This gives any citizen of Wales the right to download an electronic copy of any book in national or local public collection, including those in copyright, in exchange for a fee paid to the publisher and author, based on the number of times the digital version is read. A similar system will apply to music and film.

Care will be taken in devising this scheme that it does not undermine the conventional book and record trade.

National Archive

Wales is the only devolved administration that does not have a dedicated national archive. We will consider the options set out in the

Feasibility Report into establishing a National Archive, published in December 2020, and implement a development plan.

Other initiatives

Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama

We will support plans to make the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama an independent institution, to bring its funding up to UK Conservatoire levels, and to extend its work by adding dance to its current provision. In the process it must fully reflect the diverse and bilingual cultural life of Wales.

Music Development

In the past there have been several schemes to encourage participation by young people in music. They have tended to be short-lived initiatives that have withered on the vine. We will ensure that musical participation of all kinds is permanently embedded as a provision available to all our young people across the nation.

Festival of Wales

We will organise a year-long nationwide Festival of Wales in 2023.

Arts and the Welsh language

We will promote an increase in Welsh medium arts production and activity and the development of career pathways in the arts in the Welsh language.

Film Fund Cymru

We will replace the current Welsh Government's failed and wasteful Media Investment Fund with a new fund to invest in Welsh film content, based on the recommendations of the Senedd's Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee in this area. Our priority will be

Culture, Media and Sport

supporting our indigenous sector in the telling of original Welsh stories and exploiting partnerships and commercial opportunities to sell those to the world.

Eurovision

We will prepare a bid for Wales to take part as a nation in its own right in the internationally renowned Eurovision song contest.

Broadcasting and Media

The Covid-19 crisis has highlighted the importance of well-funded journalism and news. It has also exposed news deserts across Wales, obscuring rather than bolstering the public health messaging of the Welsh Government.

At the same time, we have seen the rapid growth of international television networks that has gone hand in hand with increasing hostility by the UK Government towards the BBC, while at the local level we have seen the weakening of local content in commercial radio and the decline of local newspapers.

Broadcasting

We will press for the full devolution of broadcasting and telecommunications to Wales, including regulatory, taxation and financial powers. As a first step, we will:

- Establish a new broadcasting and telecommunications body for Wales independent of government with a remit to include strengthening Wales' local and national democracy and the Welsh language. The new body will use all the regulatory, financial and other levers available to it in order to fulfil its remit. Its powers will include setting the terms of the next Wales channel 3 license to enhance Welsh media output and ensuring more local and Welsh language content on local television and radio.

- Establish a 'Menter Ddigidol Gymraeg' or Welsh language Digital Initiative to improve the use and access to the language in a multi-platform age.
- Press for a levy on digital and private providers in order to enhance public service broadcasting and media provision.
- Press for devolution of powers over all Welsh language and English language public service broadcasting, as well as the regulation of commercial radio and local television.

Media Commission

We will establish a Welsh Media Commission to review the current provision of Welsh news and information provision and to explore ways in which it can be better supported and developed at all levels. It will be asked to report within 12 months and will investigate:

- Welsh audience trends in news consumption across television, radio, print and online services.
- International comparisons of media support schemes, with a view to recommending appropriate support mechanisms for media in Wales.
- The potential for support for local and hyper-local journalism that speaks to the sense of community and place.
- The potential for enhancing digital news networks in the English and Welsh languages, and for creating national services that link local and hyper-local newspapers and radio stations producing open-source output.
- A route to conferring 'asset of community value' status on local newspapers, ensuring that titles cannot be closed overnight without proper scrutiny.
- Online provision in which there have been encouraging, although disparate initiatives, on which we should try to build.

Culture, Media and Sport

Sport

We will promote sporting participation at all levels and for all ages across Wales, working with sports' governing bodies, schools, community groups, voluntary organisations, and youth workers.

We will further develop our Inspire Wales programme to promote sports participation in Wales, following the example of Local Sports Partnerships in the Republic of Ireland.

We will encourage increased participation amongst the young – and especially amongst teenage girls and other underrepresented groups – by encouraging public broadcasters to devote a greater percentage of broadcast time to women's sport, especially coverage of our national women's rugby and soccer teams.

We will investigate the potential for an Olympic size swimming pool to serve north Wales. At present talented swimmers from the north who are picked to represent Wales have to travel to Manchester, Liverpool, Swansea, or Cardiff to train.

Sports events

We will bid to bring the Tour de France to Wales, for both men and women, and work with sports associations and the tourist industry to identify other opportunities for Wales to act as host for other international events.

We will develop a bid to host the Commonwealth Games in Wales in 2030 or 2034.

Celebrating sporting success

We support the development of the Welsh football museum in Wrexham, where the Football Association of Wales was founded, to showcase the story of football in Wales. We will also support proposals the establishment of a Wales Cricket Board which could progressively enter into all the various cricket formats.

Sport and the Welsh language

As a bilingual nation, it is important that all our governing bodies and organisations reflect both of our national languages. We will expect them to develop appropriate training courses and marketing information in both Welsh and English. As part of our commitment to create 1,000 new Welsh language spaces, we will incentivise Welsh language sports clubs.

JUSTICE AND EQUALITY

Summary

- Set a statutory target to cut child poverty by two-thirds by 2030, with the aim of eradicating it completely by 2035.
- Press for full devolution of the criminal justice system – the police, prisons, probation and the courts – so we can make it fairer and more equal.
- Create a Cabinet-level post of Minister for Equalities and Women’s Empowerment.
- Implement a Race Equality Action Plan for Wales aimed at eradicating systemic racism.
- Campaign to increase the numbers of those who are entitled to pension credit to sign up for it.
- Pass an Autism Act for Wales that adopts a rights based approach for people with autism, or who are suspected of having autism but are yet to receive a diagnosis.



Justice and Equality

Reducing poverty

Tackling injustices and inequalities is not a distraction or a luxury. Rather it is an opportunity to rebuild in a way which encourages a deep structural transition to an economy that better values the work we know is essential to sustaining us. We will address the crises in healthcare, social, economic and ecological policies which have been laid bare by this pandemic.

We will press for the devolution of welfare to develop a more compassionate system that protects Wales' citizens from the worst effects of the policies of successive UK governments.

Rather than merely treating the symptoms of inequality, a Plaid Cymru government will seek to address their root cause. We will seek the devolution of tax and welfare powers necessary for this purpose. In the meantime, we will begin to create the building blocks of a Welsh Wellbeing State.

We will make the abolition of poverty and inequality a core national mission. We will task a Poverty and Inequality Commission with developing a plan to achieve our goal, in the shortest term possible, of a Wales in which no one will be destitute; less than one in ten of the population are in poverty at any one time; and nobody is in poverty for more than two years.

We will pass a new Child Poverty Act that will set out a plan to eradicate child poverty, setting out a target of reducing the number of children experiencing relative poverty to 10 per cent by 2030.

Plaid Cymru's Child Payment Policy

Poverty costs Wales £3.6bn of public spending each year. The latest statistics tell us that one in three children in Wales – around 200,000 are living in poverty. In March 2018, the Equality and Human Rights Commission reported that the UK Government's tax and welfare reforms would push an extra 50,000 children in Wales into poverty by 2020-21. This is unacceptable.

That is why a Plaid Cymru Government will endeavour to make targeted payments of initially £10 a week per child, rising to £35 per week over our first term, to families living below the poverty line.

To implement this policy we will seek the devolution of welfare powers from Westminster, and immediately seek UK Government agreement that the Department of Work and Pensions would not claw back any payments.

If UK Government cooperation on these matters is not forthcoming we will urgently seek alternative ways to address child poverty within the budget we have allocated.

Justice and Equality

Poverty and poor economic performance go hand-in-hand. That is why in Government Plaid Cymru will make tackling poverty and building the economy the combined responsibility of one Minister and one department.

The principal aim of our economic policy will be raising standards of living. Raising the level of real average wages in particular will be a key policy goal. One reason why 30 per cent of Welsh children are in poverty (the figure for the population overall is 23 per cent) – is because their parents are more likely to be out of work or in low paid work due to childcare responsibilities. Two-thirds of children living in poverty have one or both parents at work. Enabling women in particular to access better paid, less precarious employment will reduce the number of children in poverty.

Justice powers

After twenty years of devolution, it is an anomaly for the Senedd not to have full control of criminal justice matters. We will press for full devolution of the criminal justice system – the police, prisons, probation and the courts – so we can create a fairer and more equal justice system.

We support the creation of a distinct legal jurisdiction in Wales.

Welsh control justice and policing will allow us to concentrate on those distinctive aspects of Welsh society which lead to different opportunities and challenges to Welsh policy makers.

Inequality is built into the heart of our justice system. Our aim will be to create a Welsh criminal justice system focused on establishing problem-solving justice initiatives that tackle the root causes of offending at an early stage, focusing on prevention rather than retribution.

We will:

1. Task the Counsel General with bringing together the diverse and uncoordinated justice functions currently held by the Welsh Government.
2. Set out a pathway for implementation of the Commission on Justice in Wales' recommendations, especially in creating a distinctive Welsh legal jurisdiction.

Criminal Justice

Whilst transformational change is difficult when we don't hold all the necessary levers in Wales, meaningful interventions can still be made. A Plaid Cymru Government will:

- Tackle the root causes of drug misuse through innovative programmes such as Checkpoint Cymru.
- Establish drug consumption rooms for people to stabilise their drug use.
- Make the reporting process of sexual violence and abuse as straightforward as possible, ensuring that all incidents are investigated and that all survivors are offered the support of an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor.
- Ensure that all victims and survivors have access to well-funded counselling services.
- Aim to understand and tackle knife crime by working with youth clubs, youth workers, schools and similar groups to improve youth services and ensure a youth club is located in every town.
- Work with communities most affected by hate crime to build the communities' confidence in the system.
- Widen the range of community penalties available to the courts as an alternative to custody.

To complement these policies, a Plaid Cymru Government will create an arms-length Criminal Justice Research Institute in order to embed academic expertise on justice and community safety in the Welsh policymaking process.

Justice and Equality

As part of a wider programme to eradicate systemic racism, including in the criminal justice system, we will:

- Review disproportionate criminal justice outcomes and the effectiveness of the justice process in dealing with racism. These reviews will draw from the Lammy and Angiolini Reports.
- Explore options around a potential stand alone offence of misogynistic harassment and make misogyny a hate crime.
- Set targets to diversify the police and magistrate benches and collaborate with bodies such as the Magistrates Association to widen the pool of candidates.

Social Justice and Equalities

Plaid Cymru believes in a fair and just society where everyone is treated equally and enjoys the same rights and opportunities. We will press for devolution of the Equality Act 2010 to the Senedd.

We will instill kindness at every level of government and in public policy, following the Scottish Government example. We will also be a Government that recognises the complex intersectional barriers that individuals must overcome. Addressing matters of equality is not a “one size fits all” approach.

We will set challenging targets for public sector recruitment for ensuring people with diverse characteristics are visibly represented in government at all levels – with a particular focus on the under-representation of women and people of colour in senior positions.

In addition we will:

- Create a Statutory Poverty and Inequality Commission.

- Seek the devolved powers to replace Carer’s Allowance with a Universal Carers Income – non-means tested and equal at least to the level of Job Seekers Allowance - for all carers providing more than 35 hours of care.
- Respond to future trends such as automation in ways that reduce inequalities rather than perpetuating them.
- Explore opportunities for promoting a shorter working week and a better work-life balance.

Women

We commit to achieving a gender equal Wales based on equality of outcome, not just equality of opportunity. We will create a Cabinet-level post of Minister for Equalities and Women’s Empowerment dedicated to implementing the recommendations of the Gender Equality Review in full.

It is not acceptable that the gender pay gap persists at 14.5 per cent in Wales. We will reduce it by increasing the pay for social care workers, awarding real term wage increases for NHS workers, ending zero-hours contracts, and including the provision of gender balance in public procurement contracts.

We aim to achieve a 50:50 gender balanced Senedd, at the same time increasing representation of people of colour, LGBT+, disabled and working-class women. We will make the Senedd’s electoral system more proportional in a way that will promote the achievement of this goal.

Parents

Parents should be supported to take periods of leave that reflect modern working practices, including flexible working. We will support a legal ban on employers making a woman redundant during pregnancy, and until six months after return from maternity leave, other than in very limited circumstances.

Justice and Equality

We will also tackle pregnancy and maternity discrimination in the workplace by supporting the call to legislate to add reporting of retention rates for women returning from maternity leave to the existing gender pay gap reporting regime.

With a multitude of changes across new parents' lives, Plaid Cymru will work to support parents' mental health during what can be a joyous, yet challenging time, by extending and standardising access to perinatal mental health services across Wales, including extending access to specialist mother and baby units within Wales as is being pioneered in Neath. We will establish an additional service in north Wales to help families who need access to acute perinatal support at such a critical time.

We will also tackle loneliness and isolation amongst new parents, especially mothers, by establishing local parent networks, inspired by the *Mamma Gruppen* initiative in Sweden.

In addition to the provision of universal child care to children from twelve months old, we believe that paid statutory parental leave, to be taken by one parent or shared, should be extended from the current 39 weeks to 52 weeks. We will continue to push for full devolution of competencies to provide a seamless transition between the end of paid parental leave and eligibility for access to our national childcare offer.

We will also introduce an extension to statutory paternity leave to 12 weeks, giving fathers and partners more time to spend with their new family.

Maternity and paternity pay and leave should be extended to families whose babies are born prematurely, before 36 weeks' gestation, with the number of weeks a baby is premature added to any parental leave arrangements.

We will introduce shared parental leave for Welsh Government employees at the enhanced maternity pay rate for fathers who take leave and encourage the same good practice in

public services, influencing good practice and using procurement levers in the private sector.

Children

We will build on programmes, such as Flying Start, to tackle Adverse Childhood Experiences and make early intervention and childhood adversity a priority. We will set out a clear national strategy to empower and encourage key public services to deliver effective, sustainable and evidence-based early intervention.

In addition we will:

- Bring the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child fully into Welsh law.
- Make new laws to protect the rights of children who are home educated.
- Ensure all children have the electronic devices they need to learn at home, and access to the internet.
- Make school expulsions a thing of the past.
- Work with Mentrau Iaith and Welsh Language Centres to encourage the use of Welsh among children.

We will align long term investment in services with long term strategies for prevention of Adverse Childhood Experiences.

Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic People

We understand that the term BAME is often contested and risks simplifying the depth and diversity of the challenges faced and eclipsing groups within the term. We will consult upon the preferred terms on an ongoing basis.

Plaid Cymru recognise that racial, ethnic and religious intolerance is systemic and institutional. We are committed to combating Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, anti-migrant sentiment, anti-Gypsy and Roma Traveller sentiment, and all forms of racism and bigotry in politics, our party, on our streets, online and in our media.

Justice and Equality

We will create and implement a Race Equality Action Plan for Wales, taking forward the detailed report and recommendations of Professor Ogbonna for the Welsh Government.

In education we will address the education attainment gap between children from different home backgrounds. We will implement the recommendations of Charlotte Williams' report on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities, and Cynefin in the New Curriculum.

We will work with the Education Workforce Council and other providers of teacher training to ensure that at all stages of their careers, teachers are trained in anti-racist practice, cultural competence, how to recognise and respond effectively to racism and to develop authentic diversity in the curriculum.

In our workplaces, we will introduce anonymised shortlisting practices into our processes and require the public sector to institute these to eliminate bias due to personal details such as name/postcode/birthdate.

We will promote anti-racist training such as unconscious bias and gender stereotyping training. Positive action schemes will be implemented both to prepare BAME people to be successful at recruitment and to progress into management roles. We commit to targets to increase BAME representation at all levels of workforce. We will support employers to recognise and take account of religious festivals and religious observance in the workplace.

In public and political life, we will publish ethnicity data in relation to pay gap, elections, public appointments and health outcomes, as well as improving ethnicity categorisation in Welsh public bodies' data capture. We will fund more mentoring, shadowing and

anti-racism programmes and investigate the culture of public and political bodies at all levels to identify potential barriers. We will openly encourage political parties and political and public bodies to consider legal positive action to achieve equal outcomes which reflect the ethnic make-up of constituencies.

In health and housing, we will implement the recommendations of the Welsh Government BAME Covid Advisory Group, and work with Local Authorities to address the housing needs and affordability concerns specific to BAME communities.

Migrants, Refugees and People Seeking Asylum

Plaid Cymru will retain the aim for Wales to become a Nation of Sanctuary, producing a new migration strategy for Wales with clear actions, timelines and budget. We commit to easing the experience of migrants and people seeking asylum. This will include ending No Recourse to Public Funds conditions and the elimination of healthcare charges for non-UK citizens in NHS Wales.

We will expand eligibility for educational grants to migrant children and young people, including Educational Maintenance Allowance, Free School Meals and the Pupil Deprivation Grant. This will give all migrants and people seeking asylum access to public services when they need them.

LGBT+

Plaid Cymru reaffirms our commitment to ensure that LGBT+ voices and experiences need to be heard and affirmed and will continue to actively promote LGBT+ rights.

On education, we will require schools to keep a register of bullying incidents related to sexuality, to take action where necessary and to involve students in anti-bullying initiatives.

Justice and Equality

We will ensure that relationships and experiences of the LGBT+ community – including the trans, nonbinary, and asexual communities are included in the statutory element of Relationships and Sex Education of the new curriculum, in all school settings, and that teacher training is available.

We commit to promoting LGBT+ inclusion throughout society, including in all workplaces.

We will promote LGBT+ participation in sport, as part of broader efforts towards healthier lifestyles, and work with clubs and organisations to be trans-inclusive, and reduce homophobic, and sexist behaviour.

We will continue to fight for equality for trans people. Having secured recurrent funding for a Wales Gender Identity Clinic, Plaid Cymru will work to improve the provision and ensure timely access to its services and support.

We support the reform of the Gender Recognition Act to introduce a streamlined, de-medicalised process based on self-declaration and in line with international best practice. We will seek the devolution of powers necessary to introduce this change and will uphold trans people's right to continue to access services and facilities in accordance with their gender identity.

We will continue to support efforts for full recognition and protection from discrimination for asexual and non-binary people under the law.

Older people

Older people across Wales have been severely affected by the health and wellbeing effects of Covid-19. The virus is known to pose a much greater threat to those aged 70 and over than any other age group.

In addition to our policies across Health, Social Care and Housing, a Plaid Cymru government will support:

- Protecting the value of the state pension for pensioners by retaining the triple lock and universal access to key benefits such as the TV licence, the bus pass and winter fuel payments.
- Calls to give early access to the state pension for those who are within three years of their state pension age and unable to work due to caring responsibilities or illness.

Until full devolution of welfare policy is achieved, we will implement an Action Plan to increase the numbers of those who are entitled to pension credit to sign up for it.

Justice and Equality

Disability

The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated health, societal and economic problems already faced by disabled people and has created new difficulties and gaps in services for many. Plaid Cymru is committed to alleviating difficulties and removing such barriers through an intersectional approach. We will:

- Establish sheltered employment schemes for people who need a more supportive environment to return to work.
- Ask employers to publish their disability pay gap.
- Ensure local authorities and social landlords provide more disabled friendly housing. All schools will have appropriate access for physically disabled pupils.
- Provide better support for people with learning difficulties, including increasing the number of specialist nurses in hospital settings to address inequalities in the provision of health services.
- Work with blind, partially sighted, and deaf people and those experiencing hearing loss, the organisations representing them, and professionals, to develop national strategies to ensure co-ordinated and equitable access to services.

Neurodiversity

Plaid Cymru believes that neurodiversity should be regarded as an equalities issue, with public services required to make reasonable adjustments in the delivery of services.

We will pass an Autism Act for Wales that adopts a rights based approach for people with autism, or who are suspected of having autism but are yet to receive a diagnosis.

INDEPENDENCE AND THE EMERGING WELSH STATE

Summary

- Hold an independence referendum during our first term in government.
- Create a statutory National Commission to oversee the process leading to the referendum, including drafting a Welsh Constitution, involving widespread consultation.
- Establish a distinct Welsh jurisdiction and devolve policing and justice, as is the case in Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- Introduce an Order to seek immediate devolution of power over currently reserved matters, including rail, welfare, broadcasting, energy projects, and the Crown Estates.
- Co-production between Welsh Government and local authorities for policy delivery, plus creation of a Public Service for Wales, with a shared culture and vision across all public sector organisations, including the civil service.
- Conduct an in-depth exploration of how an independent Wales should engage with the other nations of Britain.



Independence and the Emerging Welsh State

Welsh Independence

Decisions on the constitutional future of Wales should lie unequivocally with the people of Wales.

Accordingly, we will seek devolution of decision-making from Westminster to Wales on the holding of a referendum on Welsh independence.

We will introduce an Order to seek immediate devolution of power over currently reserved matters, including rail, welfare, broadcasting, energy projects, and the Crown Estate.

Alongside these negotiations a Plaid Cymru Government will legislate for a Welsh Self-Determination Act to pave the way for holding an independence referendum around the middle of the present decade.

A central feature of the Self-Determination Act will be the creation of a statutory National Commission to oversee the process leading to a referendum during our first term in government.

The Act will empower the Commission to establish consultative Citizens Assemblies, to conduct polls and referenda, to draw up a Constitution for an independent Wales, and to explore future relations with the rest of the UK and Europe.

The precise timing of the independence referendum within our first term in government will depend on the speed with which events occur, including:

- **The extent to which the Conservative Government at Westminster continues to undermine the devolution settlement.**
- **Moves towards Scottish independence.**
- **Potential political change in the relations between Northern Ireland and the Republic.**

The pressure of these and other fast-moving events means Wales faces a real danger of becoming part of a rump United Kingdom, in a new England-and-Wales formation. In terms of powers, that could mean Wales becoming in practice an appendage of western England. That prospect is a major factor behind the current surge in support for Welsh independence. The people of Wales are telling us they are not willing to be left behind. Electing a Plaid Cymru Government is the only way to guarantee that we can create a new Wales as part of the world-wide family of independent nations.

A Welsh Jurisdiction

A Plaid Cymru Welsh Government will immediately put in place measures to create a distinctive Welsh jurisdiction, as is the case in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

We will press for the current reservation to Westminster of powers relating to the single England and Wales jurisdiction to be removed and for adequate funding to follow the devolution of justice powers. Due to spending cuts by the UK Government, the Welsh Government is contributing almost 40 per cent of the justice spend in Wales, despite justice not being a devolved field, which is unsustainable.

The Counsel General will set out a pathway for the creation of a Welsh jurisdiction, following the recommendations of the Commission on Justice in Wales. In doing so, the Counsel General will assume responsibility for bringing together the diverse and uncoordinated justice functions currently held by the Welsh Government.

We need our own jurisdiction to address the split in responsibilities between the Westminster Government for justice in Wales, and the Welsh Government for social, health, education, and economic development policies. The absence of a distinct jurisdiction

Independence and the Emerging Welsh State

results in serious disadvantages for Wales which England, Scotland and Northern Ireland do not experience. These include:

- An inability to allocate spending in a coordinated manner.
- Complexity that leads to a waste of resources.
- Lack of coherent and accountable policies.

A Welsh Constitution

The statutory National Commission will be tasked with drafting a constitution for an independent Wales. It will be required to consult through Citizens Assemblies, being mindful of diversity and inclusion.

The Welsh Constitution should include:

- A declaration that Welsh sovereignty rests with the people of Wales.
- A description and role of Welsh governing institutions as well as the rights and responsibilities of citizens.
- That those rights and responsibilities should extend beyond the purely political and legalistic to encompass social and economic rights and responsibilities.
- That it should draw on best practice from around the world, especially constitutions that have been drawn up for small nations in analogous positions to that of Wales.

Relations between the countries of Britain

It is commonplace for independent countries to be members of wider structures involving neighbouring countries, ranging from free-trade agreements to loose political unions such as the Nordic Union between the Scandinavian countries, through to confederations such as Benelux (a union between Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg) and, indeed, the European Union itself.

The close links that Wales and Scotland have over many centuries formed with England make the case for a radically changed but close relationship between the nations of these islands as well as the rest of Europe.

The statutory National Commission, established by the Self-Determination Act, will be tasked taking soundings on future relations and structures between the nations of Britain.

A new, transformed nation

We will lay the ground work to support the fulfilment of our broader, long term vision for Wales' future as we seek to build a new, sustainable, equal and socially just independent nation – A Nation of Equals and an Equal Nation.

An effective government, a high performing country

We will introduce a national performance framework to guide not only the Welsh Government but also the wider public service and other key partners towards a shared national mission for 2030, with tangible national objectives and national indicators for the whole country, based on the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

We will introduce a streamlined set of key performance indicators for the Welsh Government and Public Service as a whole, combining reporting on expenditure with the outcomes achieved in each policy area.

We will strengthen the machinery of government and respond positively to the concerns raised and recommendations made by the Senedd's Public Accounts Committee.

Independence and the Emerging Welsh State

A transformed, diverse democracy

More than 20 years since the then Assembly was convened in 1999, it's time to take stock and to ensure our Senedd is empowered to take on the role it will inevitably play in the decades to come as the home of Welsh democracy and the legislature of a future independent Welsh state. We've known since 2004 that the Senedd is too small to fulfil its role of holding the government of the day to account. Despite great strides towards gender equality in the early days of the Senedd, we must now act to ensure that our Senedd and wider democracy reflects our modern nation in all of its diversity and reflects all the voices and aspirations of Wales' citizens.

We will therefore implement the recommendations of the Expert Panel on Assembly Electoral Reform, in particular on Single Transferable Voting, gender quotas and expanding the Senedd.

We will also consider whether the independence and effectiveness of the key apparatus around the legislature such as the Senedd's Remuneration Board, Fees Office and the Senedd's Standards Commissioner, which fulfil a key role in the effective functioning of our democracy and in providing accountability and assurance to the public, may be strengthened further.

We will support efforts to ensure the Senedd Commission is subject to the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and Welsh language standards that operate across the public sector, whilst upholding the important principle that the Commission should continue to be accountable to the Senedd.

We will continue to support the use and normalisation of the name 'Senedd' as the legislature's official name in both languages, and seek opportunities to formalise in law what has now become every day practice.

We will operate as a Government on the principle that nobody has a monopoly on good ideas and we will seek to ensure the effectiveness of channels to feed good ideas into government. We will look to support wherever possible legislative proposals from backbench Members of the Senedd and aim to act quickly and pragmatically in areas where there is political consensus around legislative proposals.

Ministry of the Future

We will create a new Ministry of the Future, responsible for digital, innovation, technology, and long-term planning. Our objective is to turn the Government into an engine of innovation, to foster entrepreneurialism and creativity within Government itself.

A priority for the new Ministry will be to "future-proof" government decisions, including budget decisions, so they are considered against the impact they will have on future generations.

An essential component of this new department will be an Innovation Team. This will adopt an experimental approach to new ideas – fast testing in the real world wherever possible, extending the use of rigorous methods like randomised control trials.

Independence and the Emerging Welsh State

We will seek to embed the use of a wide range of methods, from human centred design to behavioural economics and data-driven decision-making, to improve policy and delivery. We will accelerate the application of machine learning and AI to public services and public policy while setting out a clear ethical framework to guard against their misuse.

The Ministry will conduct an audit of our preparedness for major risks, ensuring that it is updated on a regular basis.

Co-production with local government and the creation of a Welsh Public Service

The Covid pandemic has demonstrated that local authorities are our most effective arm of government in terms of policy delivery, whether in the fields of public health, education, or economic intervention. Accordingly, we will seek a new collaborative relationship between the Welsh Government and the 22 Welsh unitary authorities on the basis of co-production in policy creation and delivery. In our first term, and as we press ahead with recovering from Covid, this new relationship will be especially important for the delivery of our education, housing and employment policies

We will create a Welsh Government Council, bringing local authority leaders and senior officers together with Welsh Government Ministers and senior officials, to coordinate joint work between central and local government. Relations will be undertaken based on equality, creating a shared view of a work programme and delivery. We will provide additional investment as an incentive for joint working.

We will create a network of Government Regional Offices headed by Chief Regional Officers responsible for coordinating the delivery of our national spatial strategy. In the Valleys and Arfor this role will be overseen by our new development agencies for these regions.

As part of our new combined approach, we will develop proposals and a timetable for the creation of a Public Service for Wales. This will have a shared culture, and vision, allowing for the ability to share and exchange staff and expertise across all public sector organisations including the Welsh Government's civil service. This will require that the reservation to Westminster of powers relating to the civil service be removed.

The Welsh Government's Academi Wales will become a National School of Public Management and Governance, attached to the Welsh University sector. It will have an increased budget, a Board of Directors to include the Permanent Secretary and an independent Chair. It will develop an international research programme related to small country governance and enter into partnership arrangements with other management schools such as the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, and France's École nationale d'administration (ENA).

Independence and the Emerging Welsh State

A Welsh Digital Service

We will create a Welsh Digital Service, headed by a Chief Digital Officer for Wales to serve the whole of the Welsh public sector. Its role will be to turn Wales into a digitally enabled country. It will:

- Develop options for Wales-wide digital infrastructure, creating similar standards, shared registries, interoperable services, and other areas where Welsh Government, public agencies and local government can better cooperate.
- Design new services across the public sector, building a new cloud-based government from the ground up, and focusing on the services that citizens, communities, businesses and other organisations need. We will set a target to move all government services to the cloud by 2023.
- Provide all Welsh citizens with a single, high-quality digital identity to access digital services which will enable access to up-to-date information about eligibility for Government help and support in all areas. By 2025 all personal health information whether from primary, secondary, community or social care will be portable across the system allowing patients and physicians, with appropriate permissions and within clinical best practice, to access all relevant information on a patient.

We will commit to a digital spending target – a percentage of Government expenditure spent on digital services through a specific digital spending review.

We will announce an ‘only-once log-in’ rule for all public services – central, arms-length, NHS and local – which must be in place by the end of 2023 at the latest.

We will ensure robust privacy rules to allow individuals to control and protect their privacy and understand how data about them is being used.

WALES AND THE WORLD

Summary

- Bring forward Wales reaching zero carbon emissions from 2050 to 2035, demonstrating our commitment to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.
- Cultivate a close partnership with Ireland, by establishing a representative office in Dublin.
- Develop an export strategy for Welsh business, involving closer connections with EU regions where we have already established relationships.
- Explore the prospects for an independent Wales becoming a member of the European Free Trade Association
- Enhance the Wales and Africa programme by extending support to Welsh groups already working in more than 25 Sub-Sahara countries.
- Pilot a project for keeping in touch with young people who leave Wales for higher education or initial employment to create a data base of diaspora talent.



Wales and the World

International Relations

Plaid Cymru will develop a Welsh international strategy based on the promotion of our values, including democracy, sustainable development, and opportunities for all regardless of gender, race, and other protected characteristics.

In response to the climate emergency, and building on the 2015 Future Generations (Wales) Act, we will make meaningful Wales's commitment to establish itself as a globally responsible nation. In particular, we will bring forward reaching zero carbon emissions from 2050 to 2035, demonstrating our commitment to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

We will continue to work with the British Council for the better promotion of Wales and Welsh culture across the world and work closely with international development organisations to promote empowerment of communities across the global south, supporting and developing existing links and exchange programmes with sub-Saharan Africa and increasing awareness in Wales.

We will work closely with sub-state governments that share common characteristics with Wales, such as bilingualism, and will continue to develop links with the Chubut Province in Argentina

We will seek Welsh associate membership of UNESCO, the Food and Agriculture Organisation, and the International Maritime Organisation.

We will establish a formal relationship between the Welsh Government and the Consular Association in Wales as a starting point for developing a strategy to encourage more diplomatic representation in Wales, bringing together key businesses, with a shared objective of enhancing the Welsh economy.

It is vitally important that Wales continues to grow the scale of its international cultural engagement, especially in view of the damaging cultural effects of Brexit. We will:

- Press the UK Government to restore, via a protocol to the UK-EU treaty, visa-free freedom of movement within the EU for artists and arts organisations from Wales and the UK, as well as access to Creative Europe programmes.
- Maintain strong financial support for the work of Wales Arts International.

Wales' Relationship with the EU

Following Brexit the prospects of the UK rejoining the EU in the medium term are remote. Nevertheless, we will make the case for the advantages for Wales and the UK as a whole, of closer regulatory alignment with the EU.

Plaid Cymru's longer-term aspiration is for an independent Wales to join the European Union, subject to a future referendum after the achievement of independence. Meanwhile, a Plaid Cymru Government will pursue every avenue to deepen our relationship with the EU. We will:

- Establish a central unit as part of the Cabinet Office to deal with international affairs, and in particular to drive a strong and consistent policy for European engagement.
- Strengthen Wales's presence in Brussels through Wales House.
- Cultivate a close partnership with Ireland, in particular by establishing a representative office in Dublin.
- Build on the recently announced International Learning Exchange Programme for Wales by seeking to align it with the European Union's Erasmus+ programme.

Wales and the World

- Develop existing partnerships with European nations and regions, such as Brittany, the Basque Country, and Flanders, and examine the scope for adding to their number.
- Sustain and develop Wales's engagement with European networks such as those promoting the work of Well-being Economy Governments and Linguistic Diversity.

We will also explore the prospects for an independent Wales becoming a member of the European Free Trade Association, with a view to becoming part of the European Economic Area. The statutory National Commission we shall establish to oversee the process leading to an independence referendum will conduct an in-depth exploration of this option.

Export Strategy

According to the Office of National Statistics just 4,300 of Wales's 105,360 enterprises were involved in exporting during 2018, with some 80 per cent exporting to the EU and 50 per cent to non-EU markets.

The international arm of Prosperity Wales, our new economic development agency, will develop a strategy aimed at widening the number of SMEs engaged in exporting and identify global markets where they can establish a comparative advantage. The strategy will include:

- Extending the Export Clusters programme that provides support networks for key business sectors.
- Identifying key international markets and matching these with Welsh businesses that have a strong export comparative advantage.
- Building export capacity with international trade advisers providing one-to-one business support.

- Expanding the Welsh network of overseas offices focusing on EU regions where we have already established relationships, including Brittany, the Basque Country, Catalunya, Flanders, Baden-Wurtemberg, Bavaria and North Rhein-Westphalia.

Global Wales

Plaid Cymru will further develop the Global Wales partnership between British Council Wales, Universities Wales, the Welsh Government, and the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales. In particular, we will continue to support the following five projects:

1. Sub-Saharan Africa

We will enhance the Wales and Africa programme by extending support to the Welsh groups already working in more than 25 countries in sub-Saharan Africa and building on the focus that has been achieved in Lesotho and Eastern Uganda. Within Wales we will grow the Hub Cymru Wales partnership which has brought together organisations such as the Welsh Centre of International Affairs, the Africa Health Links Network, the Sub-Sahara Advisory Panel, and Fair Trade Wales.

2. Action on Forests

Though forests are the lungs of our planet, they are being decimated across the world at an alarming rate due to our demand for palm oil, soy, beef, and other agri-commodities. Wales has a role in resisting this trend. This will include:

- Continuing to work with the Size of Wales project, the Mount Elgon Tree Growing Enterprise and other partners in Uganda.
- Working with the UK Government to legislate to end the importation of goods that have caused deforestation.

Wales and the World

- Introducing deforestation-free targets in procurement policy in Wales as part of our transition to utilising locally-produced and sustainable goods.
- Provide support to producer nations to ensure that supply chains do not contribute to deforestation and are sustainable, inclusive and equitable for farmers, forest communities and indigenous people.

3. Fairtrade

We will seek ways of expanding initiatives such as Coffee 2020 which is buying coffee from farmers involved in the Mbale Trees project, and Fair Do's Siopa Teg which is also importing Fair Trade and Organic coffee from Uganda

4. Women's Empowerment

We will take forward the gender and equality pilot project that has been undertaken in Uganda and Lesotho, aimed at reducing domestic abuse, increase business and skills, and develop peer to peer learning.

5. Language Transmission

We will deepen Wales' global leadership in language transmission and work with small nations and language groups as part of the UNESCO Decade of Indigenous Languages 2022-32.

Diaspora Engagement

We will continue the work of engaging with the worldwide Welsh diaspora, in the fields of business networks, the Welsh Personalities and Envoys initiative, and developing global connections with international students and staff who have studied and worked at Welsh universities.

In addition, we will establish a pilot project to test the feasibility of tracking and keeping in touch with young people who leave Wales for higher education or initial employment to ensure they are kept abreast with ongoing opportunities at home and to create a data base of diaspora talent.

Peace and Security

A Plaid Cymru-led Government will work to prevent the renewal of weapons of mass destruction, such as Trident, and will refuse to allow them to be located in Wales or Welsh waters.

We welcome the establishment of the Wales Peace Academy/Academi Heddwch Cymru. We will work with the Academi and the Welsh Centre for International Affairs to ensure a focus on peace in Welsh Government strategies and policies and that Wales makes an internationally recognised contribution to peace research and practice.

