

HELEDD FYCHAN AS

Plaid Cymru - South Wales Central



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This newsletter is an opportunity to update you on my work and some of the issues that I have been raising in the Senedd over the past two months.

The cost-of-living crisis continues to impact on many people in our communities, and my team and I have been working with organisations across the region to offer help and support to those who are struggling. Winter pressures on our NHS has also meant that more constituents have been in touch with me to share their experiences about hospital and ambulance waiting times, and ask for our support.

I've also visited a number of picket lines, to show my support and solidarity with all workers who are fighting for a fair wage and fair working conditions. This includes Royal Mail staff as well as members of the Royal College of Nursing. I've also joined a number of demonstrations, calling on the Welsh Government and the UK Government to take greater action to safeguard vital public services.

As this is my last newsletter of the year, I would also like to take the opportunity to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Heledd Fychan

Heledd Fychan MS

In your community

Myself and my team have attended many visits over the past month, meeting with community groups and organisations across the region. This included meeting an environmental campaign group in Barry to discuss the independent flood review as well as ongoing issues surrounding flooding in the area. I also met with citizens advice to discuss the ongoing cost of living challenges facing constituents this winter.

If you'd like me to visit a group or organisation in your area or if you'd like advice, please get in touch with my office.

You can learn more about my visits across the region [here](#).



Celebrating Christmas

In the run up to Christmas myself and my team have been getting into the festive spirit celebrating Christmas jumper day in support of Save the Children. We also spent the day volunteering with Pontypridd foodbank who have partnered with Tesco over the festive period to support families and individuals facing hardship this winter.

There were a lot of generous shoppers willing to support those in need. Thank you to everyone that donated - your generosity is really appreciated. A special thanks to Mandy from Pontypridd Foodbank for all that she and her hard-working team of volunteers do to support our communities.

If you or someone you know is in need of support or advice, foodbanks are ready to help. Please contact my office if you need help, including information on how to find your nearest foodbank



Post office closures

Over the past few weeks, residents have shared their concerns with me over the news that Pontypridd Post Office will be closing on the 23rd of December. I am hearing about post office branches closing across the region regularly and the impact of losing such a vital service is extremely worrying. I have raised this issue in the Senedd, and I am in regular contact with the Post Office on this matter and they are seeking to find a new operator but haven't secured anyone yet. I will keep residents updated on this issue.



Fair Pay for Nurses



In December, I joined nurses on the picket line at the Royal Glamorgan Hospital and at the University Hospital of Wales, Cardiff. Like other workers who are striking across the country they are taking a stand for fair pay and better conditions. Our Health service is under extreme pressures and with staff shortages across all NHS and social care sectors our health care workers are working in extremely dangerous conditions. It's time the value of our workers is reflected in their pay, and I will continue to support and join workers on the picket line over the coming weeks.

Visiting Penderyn

In November, I visited the Penderyn Village Pantry, based in the local Community Centre. The Pantry was set up during the pandemic and is run by a group of volunteers, who provide support during the cost-of-living crisis as well as reducing food waste. Demand continues to grow, and now with a donated outdoor unit, people can collect food throughout the week which would otherwise be thrown away.



I also had the opportunity to meet with the Chief Executive of the Penderyn Distillery, Stephen Davies. Penderyn has enjoyed great success, both in Wales and internationally. It was great to hear of their future, and the role they play as an employer, as well as how they contribute to the tourism industry and the promotion of Wales globally.

Craig yr Hesg Public Meeting

On the 16th November 2022, I held a public meeting at Craig Yr Hesg Primary School following the decision by the Welsh Government to approve the expansion of the quarry. Residents from all areas affected attended, and it was agreed to re-invigorate the campaign to ensure concerns about the quarry were addressed and to work towards its closure.

The main concerns relate to the physical and mental health impacts of the quarry, the impact of continued quarrying on the local infrastructure of the town and the impact on biodiversity through the loss of green spaces and woodlands. A steering group of local residents is currently being created to take forward this campaign if you would like to find out more or sign up to be a part of the group click [here](#).



Save St David's Hall

This past month it was announced that St David's Hall is once again being considered for privatisation by Cardiff Council. Back in 2016 I was part of the 'Cardiff without culture' campaign where we marched in Cardiff to demonstrate how poorer Cardiff and Wales would be without a thriving arts and cultural scene. I have signed to support the petition and will support any campaign fighting once more continued investment in the arts and culture by the council. Join me and sign the petition [here](#).

Welsh Covid Inquiry

This past month, I questioned the Welsh Government about their lack of accountability and refusal to hold a Wales specific covid inquiry. The impact of Covid is still felt in all our lives not just by those who lost loved ones but also the challenges on the workforce, the impact on the NHS and the mental health crisis. We owe it to everyone to learn the lessons from the pandemic so that we are in a better position as a country to deal with future pandemics.



Senedd Business

Over the past month, I have been contacted by a number of constituents who have shared their heartbreaking experiences of hospital and ambulance waiting times. These are not isolated incidents and I'm frequently contacted by concerned family members and with the news announced last month that the rapid response vehicles have stopped operating in many areas across the region, I am deeply concerned what this means for emergency care across the region as well as Wales as a whole.

I raised this issue in the Senedd and have met with the Welsh Ambulance Services Trust to discuss what plans are in place to resolve this issue.

If you have experienced something similar, please fill out the [survey](#) so that I have a better understanding of the issues across the region and can raise with the Minister for Health.



Cost of Living Report

There are countless organisations working to provide much needed support to tackle the cost of living across the region. In October, I invited many of them to discuss ways that we can all work together to tackle the cost of living.

During the event organisations shared they have seen a bigger increase in demand for services than in previous years but what was clear during the event is that we all feel that much more are being missed. A key recommendation that came out of the event was the need to make support as accessible as possible ensuring that we reach those who aren't currently accessing the support they need.


You can read the full report [here](#).

Please get in touch if you or anyone you know is in need of support or visit the dedicated section on my website: <https://www.heleddfychan.wales>

I will be holding another cost-of-living event in January find out more [here](#).



Decrease in the number of Welsh speakers



The most recent census data showed a decrease in the number of people being able to speak, read and write Welsh. This was mainly seen in the percentage of people aged 3-15 where there has been a decrease of 6% over the past 10 years.

Myself and my Plaid Cymru colleagues have long campaigned to ensure access to learning and using Welsh, as the language belongs to all of us. It's extremely concerning that the biggest fall is amongst young people especially during a time where we have seen Welsh schools closing in my own region and new English medium schools being proposed to serve the same communities. The Welsh Government need to take radical action to reverse this figure and ensure proper investment is put into education to ensure equal access to the Welsh language for everyone in Wales.

End Period Poverty in Wales

In November, I led a short debate in the Senedd calling on the Welsh Government to legislate to ensure that everyone that needs free period products can access them, wherever they live in Wales.

In August 2022, a law came into force in Scotland making it a legal duty for local authorities, education providers and specified public service bodies to provide free period products and make them easily available. This was a world first, with the aim of tackling period poverty, promote period dignity and break the stigma.

Whilst the Welsh Government is committed to tackling period poverty in Wales and is investing money in expanding the provision of free period products as well as promoting greater use of environmentally friendly products, this isn't a legal requirement. This leads to inconsistency in terms of access and the type of products available, depending on where people live in Wales.

I want to see a law introduced in Wales to secure this right and safeguard free access for the future. If you would like to support this campaign, please sign the petition.



**Make
Access to
Free Period
Products a
Law in
Wales**



Meet the team

Danny Grehan - Community Engagement Officer

Amanda Ellis - Community Engagement Officer

Brooke Webb - Communications Officer

Eleri Griffiths - Caseworker

Wendy Allsop - Administrative Officer

Ken Moon - Sustainable Futures Coordinator

How we can help

I am holding regular telephone and in person advice surgeries offering help and support to local people.

Myself and my team are able to help with a range of issues including Health, Housing, Transport, Education and Local Government.

If there's anything we can do to help you please contact us to book an appointment via the details below.

We have also teamed up with citizens advice to hold advice surgeries in the office. A list of upcoming dates and how to book are listed on my website.



Contact Heledd

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